

SMITH'S

NOV., 1912

MAGAZINE

15 CENTS



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Vol. XVI

No. 2

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

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THE PARASITE

87



HELEN R. MARTIN

Author of "The Fighting Doctor," "Tillie:
a Mennonite Maid," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY JEAN PALÉOLOGUE

CHAPTER I.

FROM his advantageous point of view on the piazza Arthur Randall, musingly observant, could overlook the lawn where the summer guests of his sister, Mrs. McCord, were gathered for five-o'clock tea, and he found himself uncommonly interested in watching the pairs or groups scattered about under the beautiful old trees or in the few weather-worn summerhouses that dotted the wide green space, while a negro butler and two maids in trim black and white served tea, cake, and daintily thin sandwiches.

Interested? Well, so long as they let him alone and did not insist upon including him as part of the scene. To contemplate this domestic and social picture was, he said to himself, to consider really a large area of life which

it typified, the graceful, æsthetically gownned women representing the whole class of leisure-loving, pleasure-seeking, non-producing feminine parasites of modern society; the comfortable, well-groomed, well-fed men standing for the conservatism which finds present conditions so satisfactory—to its own class—that its face is set with invincible resolution against any change or "progress" which would in the least disturb its well-being or its power.

In one respect, however, he reflected, the group before him was not typically modern; there was not present here, nor ever would be at his conservative sister's old Southern home, any representative of the *nouveau riche* hordes who in these days so successfully scaled the ramparts which of old had guarded inherited rank from the aggressions of vulgar money-makers. Money-making

had a social value nowadays that it had not had in the past. In a few localities, however, society still seemed able to hold itself aloof from the depredations of "upstarts"; among them notably the old city of Maryland which for one hundred and fifty years had been the home of Arthur Randall's forbears, and which was famous throughout the State for its generations of distinguished, exclusive, and genuinely superior society; a society which had given to the State three governors, two United States senators, one eminent judge, and two "delightful" novelists.

Strangely enough, its "great" men had all come from its "old families"—which in the minds of the old families was an irrefutable argument—in spite of numerous American examples to the contrary—in favor of keeping "pure" their blood. All of which, to our much-traveled young judge, Arthur Randall, had its humorous aspect by contrast with the deeply intrenched and more justifiable caste of the older countries across the water.

"Beechlands," as his sister's summer home was named, was an old colonial stone mansion on Chesapeake Bay, five miles from the aforesaid distinguished Maryland city. Most of the old families of this city had their summer homes out here on the bay, the distance from the city making just a pleasant automobile ride for the men of the families, to and from their offices. So that during no part of the year could these choice people escape from each other. Not that they wished to—being complacently unaware of their need of contact with fresh, new life, and serenely unconscious of the medievalism of their opinions, or rather prejudices, on most things in the universe. This, at least, was the view of them held by Judge Randall, detached, as he felt himself, temperamentally and intellectually, from his elder sister's world, in spite of the fact that it had been his world, too, all his life long; the difference being that in his case its influences had been counteracted or supplemented by travel; and by that other wider universe created for him from his omnivorous read-

ing, in which, indeed, he did really live, and move, and have his essential being.

"I see you have your old school friend, Madam Amy Tyson, here, haven't you? And her daughter," he remarked to his sister who, upon his appearing on the piazza fifteen minutes ago, had, as soon as possible, left her guests to greet him, for he had but just arrived from Eastport for the week-end.

Something of the innate fineness of this young Southern gentleman of blood and culture had been at once manifest in the subtly exquisite courtesy with which he had risen to meet his sister and make her comfortable in an easy-chair in the shade.

Mrs. McCord's devotion to her brother, six years younger than herself, hardly less deep than her love for her own two grown sons, had never been shaken through all the shock and strain, upon her profoundly conventional soul, of his radicalism not only in thought but in deed, and of his one terrible misstep, taken four years ago, to the very brink of ruin.

A plain, small, dark woman of forty, of insignificant appearance, there was yet an air about her, a native dignity, that set her apart as of no common stock. Reserved and rather cold in manner, there was nevertheless in her bearing toward those she cared for a graciousness, an undemonstrative tenderness, that made them in turn almost worship her. Her friendships, limited in kind and number, were not superficial, but vital and lifelong. Her prejudices, ingrained in the fiber of her, were unshaken by travel, by reading, by experience. True to herself and sincere in every relation in life, she was a strange compound of nobility, fineness, narrowness, and ignorance.

Unlike his sister, Judge Randall was tall and of very substantial build, though he had what was known in his county as "the Randall cameo features." In his boyhood and early manhood he had been rather ashamed of being so good-looking; in later years more serious troubles had overshadowed this lighter affliction. The rather excessive refinement of his features, however, did

not counteract their strength, for his really splendid head, his gray eyes, with their extraordinarily clear, deep light, gave him, with his fine physique, an arresting look of power both physical and spiritual—a power which, at the age of thirty-four, had not only landed him, through the practice of the law, on the supreme bench of his State, but had made him its foremost citizen. Nor was this look of power diminished by the unmistakable melancholy of his countenance, the mark set upon him by the tragic experience of four years ago, an experience which had left him, while still so young a man, embittered, cynical, spiritually frozen, save for one live coal which still burned in his otherwise torpid heart.

"It is so odd, isn't it, to see babyish little Amy Tyson with a grown daughter!" his sister answered his query, smiling, as she sipped her tea. "And Catherine looks such a huge girl beside her dainty, small mother, doesn't she?"

"She's a handsome young animal, by Jupiter!" replied Randall, who was given at times to a vigorous bluntness of speech which seemed oddly at variance with his old-fashioned courtliness of manner and "the Randall cameo features"—as though a strain of primeval savagery in him revolted at its long enslavement to civilization.

"What a way to speak of a girl!" Mrs. McCord affectionately protested, her shining countenance and her whole attitude toward her brother betraying her pride in and adoration of him.

"That's *all* she is, Sally."

"Oh, no, dear! Why, how could Catherine Tyson be anything else than exquisite in every way, with such blood as she has? And such an unmistakable look of race? And as you've not seen her since she was a child, you can't possibly *know* such a dreadful thing as you said!"

"There, there; I didn't mean what you suppose. What, by the way," he demanded, with a short laugh, "*do* you suppose?"

"You imply that she is coarse!"

"If she satisfies your hypersevere standards, my dear, as to what a young

girl ought to be, she's indeed a model of propriety. I'll admit that on your word without proof!"

"But what led you to think, as you so brutally remarked, dear, that she's an 'animal'?"

"Therein, I suspect, lies her only value. It is a value of a kind. She's well-rounded, soft, and cool, and smooth, and beautiful. A prize animal, too, as to breeding—nothing left to desire in that line. Her spiritual values, however, are, I should judge, purely negative. She's merely not anything she ought not to be."

"Oh, Arthur! Catherine Tyson is one of the most positive characters I've ever known! Wait until you've talked with her just two minutes! I can't think where you *see* what you say!" she cried, really puzzled as she followed the direction of his gaze across the lawn to where the very beautiful and rather haughty-looking young woman in question sipped tea as she lounged in a deep willow chair, with Mrs. McCord's eldest son sprawled on the grass at her feet.

"Can you imagine, Sally, that truly elegant-looking girl doing anything worth doing? She's the most relaxed individual I ever saw! Just look at her—repose in every muscle; absolute repose."

"That is her charm, Arthur—the charm that stamps her for what she so preëminently *is*—a gentlewoman."

"Exactly. The culmination of generations of cultivation; the ripe fruit followed by the tree's stagnation; the beautiful autumn hue preceding decay."

"What nonsense you talk, dear!"

"She's worse than her futile mother. Your friend Amy, I remember, was never known to finish anything she'd begun, from a piece of embroidery to a magazine story; and had a way of going about dropping things—her sewing, her magazine, her jewelry, any old thing! But this daughter of hers, I surmise, would not go so far as to *begin* anything!"

"You're mistaken! She's not only a very efficient girl, with a strong will and plenty of common sense, but she's her



"We're a tribe—an Indian tribe. You may join our tribe, Odber!"

mother's right-hand man. Poor little Amy looks up to her big daughter in awe, and takes her advice about everything."

"Yes—yes!" he dismissed the subject indifferently. "I should judge the girl to be quite a personality." And though his sister could not reconcile this admission with his not recanting his aspersions as to her "negative" quality, she was so used to her inability to make Arthur's inconsistencies hang together that she usually did not try. "A strong personality gone to waste," he added reflectively. "Might have amounted to something if she had not been born an heiress to a great fortune."

"Not gone to waste," his sister murmured. "She fills her proper place beautifully, and will continue to fill and

grace it all her life, I am sure! You'll change your opinion when you talk to her. Amy, by the way," she remarked, with a little indulgent laugh for the folly of her frivolous old school friend, "has been lauding you to Catherine to such a degree that I'm afraid she's inspired the poor girl with a mortal aversion to you. Which, however," she added reassuringly, "she'll of course get over quickly enough when she sees and knows you."

"Gods, Sally! If I'd known you had all these people here, even my homesickness for my boy would not have tempted me to spend the week-end here! I'd have had Bappis come to me over Sunday," he said,

and it was noticeable how even a casual mention of his little son softened the hard lines of his face. "Why didn't you warn me?"

"The truth is, I wanted you to meet Catherine Tyson. I think she has bloomed out so beautifully."

"But why should you want me to meet her?"

Leaning sidewise against the arm of her chair, to bring herself nearer to him, she answered confidentially: "Dear, I see no reason why you should not find happiness again!"

A slight astonishment stirred the rather stony serenity which was habitual with him.

"'Happiness?' 'Find' it with Catherine Tyson? Sally!" He turned a speculative gaze upon her. "How my life has

revolutionized your views if you can be plotting for me matrimonially!"

"My views are what they've always been. I'm not given to changing my views with every new book I read, as *you* seem to do, dearie! But your experience," she added, coloring sensitively at touching upon the sore and hateful subject, "is simply too exceptional to come under ordinary rules."

"From present appearances I should be cutting out your Ned, my dear!" He shrugged his square shoulders.

"Not only Ned, but all the young men of the neighborhood! Catherine has them all at her feet. And she is so beautifully indifferent!"

"She can afford to be," he granted. "And," he placidly added, "she can continue to be, for me."

"I have never known a woman to be indifferent to you, Arthur, if you thawed enough to notice her."

"That's *your* view of your wonderful brother. But, Sally," he added, a bit coldly, "don't waste yourself plotting matrimony for me! Even if I were not incapable, after what I've been through, of caring for a woman enough to marry her—do you forget that there's Bappis—and—and Laura!"

"*She* is not to be considered!" his sister, her color deepening, hastily replied; and it was evident that both she and Randall shrank before this redoubtable theme, though Mrs. McCord's look and tone showed also that she could hate as strongly as she could love.

"You must know that most women," Randall insisted, his face gone a shade pale, "would have a prejudice against marrying me while Laura lives—not to mention Bappis."

"Most women of to-day have no prejudice whatever against marrying a divorced man when he is—well, the kind of man you are—good-looking, charming, reasonably well-off, and with a rising reputation."

"You strangely overlook the fact that any woman who considered me would at least want to know the cause of my divorce."

"We could certainly satisfy her on

that score," she quickly answered, though her tone was by no means so confident as her words.

"If she could be too easily satisfied, she'd hardly be a woman I'd place over Bappis. And he's another impediment, of course, to my thinking of marrying."

"It's for his sake you'll have to marry. It's the only solution of the Bappis problem. Bappis must have a mother, a home."

"A stepmother?"

"He couldn't drive away a stepmother as he does every nurse and housekeeper you employ. You, too, need a home, Arthur, which you've found you can't have without a mistress for it. There isn't anything you have not *tried* in the way of housekeepers, from reduced gentlewomen to negro mummies. The reduced gentlewomen were the worst, weren't they? I don't see what's left for you but matrimony. You'd be much more comfortable."

"And you actually imagine that my marrying that luxurious, seductive maiden out yonder would find Bappis less motherless than he is now? Ha!" he laughed, almost sardonically, a quick fire in his eyes. "Believe me, I shall protect my boy from such a fate as that! Why, I'd as soon give him for a stepmother that other young parasite I see you still have hanging on here—that impecunious distant cousin of your husband, who's always sponging on you—what's her name? The demure-looking girl that's pouring tea out yonder."

"Joan? Yes, she's still 'hanging on.' She always does until I tell her I need her room for a few weeks, and present her with a mileage book to go to another distant cousin's. But, poor child, what else is she to do?"

"Work for her living. She'd far better, than work so hard at being a parasite."

"Hubert offered her a position once in his office, but she didn't seem to want it. She and her mother, too, I understand, have a mortal dread of sinking in the social scale through their poverty. That's why she hangs on so desperately here and elsewhere. But we

don't mind having her. She's so unobtrusive, one hardly knows she's about. Now, *there's* a 'negative' individual, talking about 'negative' people. But, young as she is, she's nevertheless rather useful here. She tries to be, so that she may have more of a foothold, you know; I always find when she has gone that I miss the odds and ends she's constantly doing for me, though I confess I don't miss her conversation or any other brilliant quality!"

"A sycophant, too, poor worm! The worst of *her* is—as I happened to learn recently—that her poor, delicate mother does work for a living—and very hard, too—to keep this Joan in finery for her round of visits! Rather base of the girl, I say, Sally!"

"But what does her mother *do*?" Sally inquired, astonished. "I never met her but once, and then she seemed to me to have even less backbone than Joan. I don't see how she could ever earn a dollar! I've often wondered how Joan managed to dress so well on the little they must certainly have. But of course if her mother helps out by working! Do you know what she *does*?"

He laughed.

"Writes verses and 'sentiments' for valentines and birthday cards. Sometimes she sells them, and sometimes she does not. A young lawyer of Annapolis whom she recently employed to collect a bad debt on commission from one of these valentine publishers asked my advice, and when he found I knew who she was, he confided to me that her case was pathetic; that she spent every dollar she earned on her 'society daughter,' as he called this Joan, and nearly starved herself."

"Oh, but, Arthur, I can't think Joan is such a wretch! She is really a very sweet girl."

"Sally, dear, the way you can't see flaws in your friends! Even in your caittiff of a brother! Well, it's a very amiable trait, sister! As for Joan Laird's mother, I saw her myself for a few minutes in her lawyer's office, and she seemed to me a frail little wreck of a woman. It's a shame for the girl

to prey upon her! She ought instead to be taking care of her!"

"Of course she ought! But about Bappis, Arthur—he does need a step-mother! For you know you are really foolish about your boy! It *isn't* wise for you to forbid his being disciplined—*effectually* disciplined—by those who have the care of him. It has got to the point, dear, when neither servants nor relatives can stand it, though I hate to say such unpleasant things to you!" she pleaded.

"My 'foolishness' about my boy, Sally, is my one saving grace—the raft to which I've clung ever since he was born, to save myself from being submerged entirely!"

"But your love ought not to blind you to his welfare, Arthur, dear."

"It is my love which I trust to guide me in the matter of his welfare."

"I admit it does guide you in your *own* dealings with him, for when you are by you certainly do make him behave himself. But the moment you are gone—well!" she gasped. "It's battle, murder, and sudden death! War, pestilence, and famine! For the rest of us!"

For three reasons Judge Randall never took his sister's complaints of his son so seriously as he might otherwise have done; first, he did not share her conviction that a well-behaved child is a cowed child; secondly, her deep and bitter resentment against the child's mother—once her loved friend whom, had the offending husband been any one but her idolized brother, Sally would have considered outrageously sinned against rather than sinning—made it impossible for her to feel affection for the boy that so strongly resembled the hated woman who had refused forgiveness to Arthur Randall; thirdly, Arthur, junior—or "Bappis," as his father had always called him, after his infant effort to pronounce the capital city Annapolis—was too decided a character to get on peaceably with so dominating a personality as his Aunt Sally. Arthur, senior, himself, got on with her only by never contradicting her or arguing with her if he could avoid it. As-

sertive people, unless their assertions took the form of her own convictions, never got on with Mrs. McCord.

"I'm afraid," he gravely answered her just now, "that in leaving Bappis on your hands this summer, Sally, I am imposing on your unselfish kindness to me. But," he added, frowning back a look almost of tears, "I've been hard pushed to know what to do with the little man! Very hard pushed—or I should not have afflicted you—knowing how you feel toward him—how you can't help feeling!"

"Dear!" She remorsefully laid her hand on his. "There is nothing, *nothing* too much for me to do for you! It isn't that. Only, if you would give me leave to discipline the child in my own way, when he needs it——"

Randall shook his head.

"No doubt I'm unreasonable, but I can't permit it. One must love a child to be just to him—especially a child so aggressive, positive, and altogether difficult as Bappis. And then, the way he is knocked about from pillar to post, and left, for the most part, to the mercy of unscrupulous and sometimes cruel servants—the latter has happened, as you know—I can't have any one 'effectually' punishing the boy for faults which are wholly the results of his unfortunate environment."

"Then," said his sister, who, for a high-strung, sensitive woman, was at times strangely obtuse, "rather than have things go on this way, you'd better, for the boy's own good, send him—to his mother, Arthur!"

Arthur Randall bit his lip hard before he answered. He realized how this suggestion measured her growing aversion to the boy.

"That would mean, you know, that I give him up absolutely, probably never to see him again."

"She still asks that?"

"Demands it. Thinks any contact with me polluting to her son! And I'd cut off my right hand—yes, my head—before I would part with him so absolutely!"

He rose abruptly to relieve her of her teacup, his face cold and set.

"I see your Catherine Tyson is strolling up here—so I'll go and find Bappis. He was sleeping when I got here. He'll be having his bath by now."

"Not yet. The whole house knows it when Bappis has his bath! Because, if you please, he doesn't like his nurse; so he kicks her, floods the bathroom with water, and raises bedlam generally. The new nurse girl who came last Sunday has, by the way, given notice."

"Oh, confound her! I thought she seemed really promising. Well!" He drew a long, hard breath. "Well, well! I'll go and bathe him myself. And you'll hear no noise of battle!"

He turned away, just as Catherine Tyson, followed by Ned McCord, reached the piazza steps.

"Anyway," thought his sister, "I have at least succeeded in putting the marriage idea into his head. It is the only thing for him to do, and I shall try my best to bring it about! He'll be much better off in every way. And I hope the stepmother he gives Bappis will be the sort Bappis needs—the sort the little tyrant can't knock down and jump on! Catherine Tyson would so perfectly fill the bill!"

CHAPTER II.

It was no wonder that Bappis, at the age of six, was an insurgent of the first water against every form of coercion save his father's; for he had been obliged during the past four years to fight his way like a Bonaparte through a small army of well-meaning but not always wise or loving relatives and a large army of unprincipled nursemaids; so that he had now arrived at the conviction, uncomfortable for himself and others, that every hand save his father's was against him, and that the advent of a newcomer in his small world was the signal for him to battle.

Judge Randall's first sight of his little son to-day as he was undergoing the last stages of his afternoon toilet in the bathroom, the donning of a fresh white Russian blouse, gave him a startled impression of a change in his aspect, a more childlike happiness in his face, a

more erect carriage of his little frame, a generally stronger, more wholesome hue from head to foot, than he had worn two weeks ago, when Randall had last seen him. In view of the interview he had just had with his sister, he was the more surprised. And, contrary to Sally's predictions, and it must be confessed to his own questioning astonishment, he found the boy quite cheerfully submissive under his nurse's hands.

"Obber! Oh, Obber!" he greeted his father ecstatically. This name having been his baby attempt at "Arthur," as he had been wont to hear his mother call his father; another of those relics of his infancy which his doting father had never let him drop. "Obber, I can spell three new words that Tante Joan taught me! Here on the fawcets—h-o-t cold; c-o-l-d hot; and here on this pipe—w-a-s-t-e—shirt waist!" he triumphantly brought out after an instant's hesitation.

"Tante Joan, Bappis?"

"Yes, she says she'll be my aunt, so's we can be more intimate."

"Ah!" This was indeed an unheard-of phase—Bappis welcoming, apparently, to intimacy a would-be relative—the friendly overtures of his kin being usually repulsed with suspicion and without ceremony. What did it mean?

"But when I'm Red Wing, the Indian chief, then she's my squaw, and her name is Gold Tooth, because she has a gold tooth in the back of her mouth. Oh, we have lots of fun! I like Tante Joan better than any of the other boys—except," he piously added, "of course Jesus! Obber," he suddenly demanded anxiously, "I can stay here all summer, can't I? I have such a great time here."

Not within his memory had Judge Randall been accosted, after a two weeks' separation from his boy, with other than a passionate pleading to be taken with his father from the place where, at the time, he happened to be sojourning.

"Is it all because of 'Tante Joan,'" he asked incredulously, "that you have such 'a great time'?"

"Oh, yes! She always comes up with

me when I have to go to bed, unless Aunt Sally needs her for something, and she tells me stories, and every morning I go to her room and get into her bed, and she tells me stories again. We're very intimate. We're a tribe—an Indian tribe. *You* may join our tribe, Obber!"

"Thank you for the honor, Bappis. And if you really want to stay here, you'll have to be very careful, you know, to make no trouble for Aunt Sally. You must not fight your nurse and howl when she washes you and——"

"Yes," broke in the black nurse girl sullenly, in spite of the awe she felt before her employer, "he nearly tears the clothes off of me when I take him from Miss Joan to scrub him! He won't behave unless Miss Joan will come along, too, and stay by while he's bein' washed. The only reason you-all didn't hear him holler to-day was that Miss Joan told him if he hollered she would not tell him any yarns to-night after he was in bed. She couldn't come along up this afternoon because Mrs. McCord needed her to pour tea. And, anyhow, when Mrs. McCord saw *you'd* got here, judge, she said Miss Joan wasn't to play with Bappis so much, and humor him so much, while you're here—it gets him too spoilt. Oh, if it wasn't for Miss Joan's holdin' him down with her wheelin' of him, I'd have left before *this*!"

"I'll be glad when you do go, you old Cassy!" retorted Bappis. "And I only act spoilt when Tante Joan *isn't* with me, not when she is! And I wish you were drowned dead!"

"Tut, tut, Bappis! Apologize to Cassy instantly—and don't let me hear you speak to her so again!"

The boy obeyed at once, glibly and perfunctorily pronouncing the oft-exacted formula of apology. He was always perfectly docile with his father. Randall had long since proved to himself that the child could be governed alone through his affections. Without actual brutality it was impossible to cow him.

"What kinds of stories does your new 'aunt' tell you?" he asked.

"Oh-h," drawled Bappis, "about Sieg-

fried, and Hiawatha, and Columbus, and Hercules, and Perseus, and George Washington, and all the heroes."

"She learns him to be so wonderful intelligent!" the maid volunteered.

"Cassy," Bappis patronizingly admonished her, "you should say *teaches* him, not *learns* him."

"La, Bappis, I ain't one of them Four Hundred—it don't matter how *I* talk my grammar!"

Randall laughed, patted Bappis' head,

ernessing, or even child's nursing—anything, I should think, would be better for her than this sponging around on people that don't really want her, and imposing on that frail mother of hers!"

It was not, he decided, that she was incompetent, for she seemed to have an aptitude, at least, in dealing with a child—seeing how she actually governed Bappis without his knowing he was governed. And it was not that she was lazy, for no one who regularly employed



As though he had not heard her he continued: "If we are a superior class, why keep our superiority to ourselves?"

and presently went away to dress for dinner.

He reflected, as he shaved and dressed, upon "the wonderful ways of Providence" in turning to such good account the little parasite's efforts to so ingratiate herself with her hostess as to make herself an almost indispensable adjunct in a comfortable and even luxurious home to which she had no sort of title.

"Now, why wouldn't the damsel be happier," he idly speculated, "in finding some sort of a legitimate job at gov-

her on a salary would exact half the really hard service he had seen her render here voluntarily for her mere board and the tolerant, amiable contempt of those she served. She worked so very much harder eluding self-support than ever she'd have to work at it. It must be that she suffered from the old-fashioned Southern false pride about a woman's working for her living. But why didn't the poor little fool see that her present career manifested such a very lamentable lack of proper pride and self-respect? And she did not seem

to have any false pride about her mother's working for money!

However, that her pitiable scheming to hold her insecure social place should take the form of making his forlorn little boy happier, inevitably softened his strong aversion to the type she represented.

It occurred to him that it was rather odd of Sally not to have mentioned the very useful part "Tante Joan" was playing in the redoubtable task of managing Bappis.

"She's perhaps afraid that any one able to deal with him so effectually might tempt me to marry her offhand—to secure her as a permanent child's nurse—especially as wedlock seems to Sally the only solution of my tribulations with servants, housekeepers, and their ilk! Praise God, I don't agree with her! Not *that* solution of my troubles!"

But while his sister pleaded for a stepmother for the boy, the bride would have to be, Randall knew, to satisfy Sally's fastidious ambitions for her brother, of a brilliancy in their world equal at least to that of the wife who had divorced him. Yes, evidently Sally had feared to draw his attention to Joan Laird's gracious offices in behalf of Bappis. She even, according to the nurse girl, had, upon his coming to-day, prohibited those offices altogether, on the plea that Joan "spoiled" the boy.

Catherine Tyson, on the contrary—he recognized his sister's view—left nothing to be desired, in the way of radiance, for the high post of his legal mistress.

He grinned rather sardonically as the situation thus opened up before him.

CHAPTER III.

At dinner that evening Miss Catherine Tyson became, toward the end of the meal, vaguely conscious of the fact that she was undergoing an unprecedented experience. A brilliant career of conquests had taught her that on the part of one so inordinately, even riotously, beautiful, a studied indifference

toward any male mortal who came within the radiance of her loveliness was usually all that was needed to sting and goad the poor wretch to concentrated effort at winning her coveted attention.

In the case, however, of this distinguished-looking young judge who had taken her out to dinner, the formula did not seem to work, though she was confident that never had she looked better than in this pale green *crêpe de Paris* gown she was wearing to-night. To her own surprise she found that *his* indifference was having precisely the effect upon her which hers was not having upon him; it stung her to a desire to compel his attention to what surely ought at this moment to be engaging it. Why, the man seemed really more interested in his two nephews—the slangy Harvard boy, his namesake, who sat opposite him, and the effeminate elder son of his sister on his left—than in her.

"Cousin Sally," as Catherine by courtesy, and according to the quaint Southern custom, called Mrs. McCord, who was no relation to her, had been haranguing her son Artie—very tiresomely, Catherine thought—on his disregard of her wishes the night before at a dance given by one of the neighboring families, his mother having charged both him and his elder brother, Ned, on their starting to the party, that they were not, on pain of her deep displeasure, to dance with the Popples girls—two pretty, popular, and enormously rich, but supposedly plebeian inhabitants of this select and exclusive community; and her younger boy had had the temerity to disobey her.

"Why should we be forced to meet 'new' people?" "Cousin Sally" had been lamenting. "Why should any of our old families here—and especially the Mitchells, with such traditions as they have behind them—thrust upon us these Popples, whose intrusiveness in building out here, after failing to wedge themselves into society in town, ought to be thoroughly snubbed? And," she added, with a faint flush of repressed anger, "that one of my own sons, know-

ing how strongly I felt about it, should dance with the little upstarts!"

Clad in a low-necked black lace gown, Mrs. McCord, in her flushed indignation, looked almost handsome. The fine old room, with its white woodwork, Sheraton furniture, family portraits, and glittering old silver, was a distinguished setting for her dignified presiding at the head of her beautifully appointed table.

"But, mother," her guilty son protested, "I had told Mollie Popples last week at the tennis match that I'd be at the dance with bells on! And I hadn't the 'pep,' after that, not to ask her for a dance. Anyway, you saw how all the fellows, except a few daisy rah-rahs like Ned, danced with her and her sister; and I didn't want to be the only one not to have a stand-in with them."

"Boys are such sheep about girls!" remarked Ned, in his high falsetto. "No sooner do they see a girl attracting a bit of attention than they all think they've got to be in it, too; while another far more attractive girl may sit out every dance simply because the tide wasn't started in her direction. You see that all the time."

"But, mother, really," argued Artie, "the Poppleses are all to the good! No grapefruit about them, I tell you! And I'm not the bonehead to miss a trick when I've a chance with a girl like Mollie Popples!"

"Even when it means disobeying your mother?"

"Artie, go stand in the corner!" he admonished himself so absurdly that the unpleasant discussion was turned to a general laugh.

"Anyway," Artie concluded, "the 'new rich' are *always* being slammed at by the old poor! What's the good?"

"I shouldn't wonder if these Poppleses of yours, Artie," remarked Catherine, with her habitually languid and rather bored manner of speech, which was curiously fascinating because absolutely natural, "are the very ones who were at our hotel in Rome last winter. Don't you remember, mamma?"

"Oh," cried the fussy, ineffectual little mother of this tall, strong, cool

maiden, "do you mean, dearest, the Mrs. Popples who told me she was going to have her daughter's portrait painted by one of the old masters?"

"And did she?" inquired Artie.

"Think, Sally, what you miss, not knowing the Poppleses if they are given to remarks like that!" said Randall.

"And I had been so sure," shrugged Catherine, "from seeing how avid they were to improve their minds at art galleries and ruins that they were at least nothing *less* than three school-teachers! It was such a come-down to find they were only *nouveau riche* millionaires. I stayed away from the dance last night, and insisted upon mamma's staying away because I was sure, if they were those Poppleses, they'd be impertinent enough to claim acquaintance with us."

"And use it as an excuse for calling here, no doubt!" Sally also shrugged.

"Don't you think it!" cried Artie. "I can't speak for the mother, but I know the two girls aren't such ivory tops!"

"If only you'd speak English, Artie! What, may I ask, are we to understand by an ivory top?" protested his mother.

"Bonehead. Ivory dome. As it were, stupid."

"All you seem to learn at Harvard is a very complete vocabulary of slang and a lack of respect for your mother!"

"And she doesn't see," Judge Randall reflected, as he sipped his wine, "that the son she can't dominate is going to make twice the man that her obedient Ned will ever be. And Ned would be twice the man he is if he had ever been encouraged to be himself. But 'live and let live' was never Sally's motto!"

"Now, I should think, you know," he suddenly remarked, with a smile that was half ironic, half enigmatic, "that people like you all who, by virtue of your inherited superiority, can afford to risk contact with a lower order, without danger of being damaged—I am speaking for you all, not for the lower order—that you would eagerly welcome the diversion of a new and different element into your world. Exclusive, conservative society is inevitably dull society."

"You will admit, however, Uncle Ar-

thur," Ned observed, "that conservative society has at least the advantage of being dignified and elegant society."

"Yes—if dignity and elegance are sufficient compensations for stupidity."

"Oh! Thanks!" Catherine drawled, turning slightly toward him.

But as though he had not heard her he continued: "If we are a superior class, why keep our superiority to ourselves? Why not philanthropically give our inferiors the benefit? Snobbery is surely a necessity only to those who are not sure of themselves. We who know we are the real thing—it is our privilege to be democratic."

"Are these epigrams we are hearing?" Catherine smiled, with a lift of her brows. "And is your brother serious, Cousin Sally, or is he poking fun at us?"

"I can't tell you, Catherine. I never know when he means what he says."

"Not to mention," continued Randall imperturbably, "the benefit to ourselves of learning to value a fellow being for his personal qualities purely, apart from any accidents of birth; and to choose our comrades on the only true basis of human fellowship—community of temperament and interest—independently of any other consideration."

Here Catherine, turning in her chair, directly and insistently addressed him:

"There can't be any community of temperament and interest except among those of the same social world. Exclusiveness is not vulgar snobbery. It is eminently reasonable."

"Your smug little 'social world'!" He smiled, without so much as a glance at her.

"Your Utopian theory of leveling all classes, Arthur," spoke up his portly brother-in-law, Hubert McCord, an able and prosperous corporation lawyer, "will never find any sympathizers in this house, you know—not while Sally's at the head of it!"

"God seems always to have tolerated the subjection of the lower classes to the higher—of the weak to the strong, so why should you presume to think it intolerable, Arthur?" his sister inquired.

"Lower classes?" broke in Catherine's mother, with characteristic vague irrelevance. "Oh, but, judge, we must of course have lower classes! It's so odd the way some otherwise quite nice people these days think we could get along without any lower classes!"

"And some dreadful people go so far these days, Madam Amy, as to think we could even get on without a hell!" he gravely lamented.

"Oh, but how could we? And as for the lower classes—why, my dear judge, what selfish creatures we'd be if there were no poor for us to be charitable to!"

"You'd agree with the poet who wrote 'The Hymn of the Elect'—wouldn't you, Madam Amy?"

"We thank Thee, Lord, for many poor,
If thus some rich may be;
For thus may we assist them with
Our blessed charity."

"We thank Thee, Lord, that sinners are
As sands upon the beach,
For thus may we, a chosen band,
Thy Gospel to them teach."

"How sweetly true!" exclaimed Madam Tyson.

Randall's amused glance swept the table. But he met no answering smile. Even that silent, dull Joan, seated opposite him, between Mr. McCord and Artie, and looking, in her simple but exquisitely fine white dimity frock, demurely girlish and irritatingly meek; even she, no doubt, held—if she ever had an opinion about anything—as stubborn prejudices in favor of the rights of the class to which she so perilously clung, as did his sister herself.

"The poor we have always with us" is likely to keep on being true," said McCord, "so long as we refrain, with modern politeness, from killing off the undesirables, the leftovers, the supine and spineless creatures! It's a heavy load for society to carry—the poor, the helpless, the incapable. But modern organized charity, with the nobly generous support given it by our millionaires, does deal with the problem quite effectually—the only way it *can* be dealt

with while human nature is human nature," he affirmed dogmatically.

"Then you really think, Hubert," said Randall, a gleam in his eyes which belied the grave quiet of his tone and manner, for he was a statesman, not a politician; a social prophet rather than a social economist, "you really think that the only help for the horrors of abject poverty and unemployment as we all know that they exist is 'charity' as it is now practiced? You think there is no better remedy than this merely temporary and most inadequate palliative of a deep-seated horror—a remedy that only hacks away at random at the jungle of evils that surround us! Poverty is a widespread disease. How do we deal with other epidemics of disease? We don't merely nurse the patients while allowing the disease to go on spreading. We attack the cause of the disease. Is there no reconstruction of society in which unemployment and want *could* not be?"

"You are surely not so visionary as to think such a state of society is a possibility?"

"My faith in God and man is even so high," admitted Randall.

"How about the survival of the fit and the extinction of the unfit?" glibly demanded Hubert, with the air of cocksureness by which he forged his pre-eminently successful way. "Isn't that the law of nature from beast to man? It seems to take all the weaklings the world can turn out to make blood for the few that are leaders and strong—in the human and in the animal world. You may think it dreadful as applied to individuals. But, after all, it reacts beneficially upon the individual."

"If on that reasoning you justify abuses, then by the same process you would justify a Squeers running a Do-the-boys Hall. The strong exploiting the weak. He was even doing some good, you know—the boys were housed, fed, and given a bit of schooling, and were kept from being on the state for support. No, no, Hubert, we are on the verge of a social reconstruction in which the state shall not, as at present, merely foster the survival of the fit,

but, as Huxley says, shall fit as many as possible to survive."

"Well, isn't that just what the charity of our millionaires is doing?" demanded Hubert.

"The charity of our millionaires?"

Randall repeated dubiously. "Their activities seem to me to be directed more conspicuously to corrupting our legislatures, perverting our education through their endowment of universities, hindering the preaching of true Christianity through their support of churches; supplanting our democracy with a government by financiers for financiers. Oh, I grant you that they work very hard at thinking they are doing good—and it's all perfectly futile, as every one in his heart knows!"

"Well, Arthur, if you weren't Sally's brother you wouldn't have *my* vote when you're up for office! Men with your views are dangerous!"

"I hope we are—to the present state of things!"

"Sometimes, Arthur, I really suspect you are a *socialist*!" Sally dared this damning suspicion with a flush of shame at the insult she felt she was offering.

"Socialism," replied Arthur, unaware of being insulted, "merely aims to do for the benefit of the nation what our greatest business men have been engaged for some years in doing for the benefit of themselves. Bernard Shaw says," he added, with what seemed to his sister utter irrelevance, "that all progress is a war on society."

"As for Bernard Shaw—I don't like him!" she pronounced coldly, as she rose to lead the way from the table.

Again Arthur was the only one to find in this characteristically feminine disposing of an argument anything amusing. As the ladies filed past him to the piazza not one of them but looked either serious or aggressive over his attack upon their deep-seated prejudices, from Sally's bristling pride, Catherine's indolent disdain, and Madam Amy's bewildered astonishment at questioning things so fundamental and obvious, to Joan's passive sweetness.

"But, Uncle Arthur," inquired his



"Bappis is bawlin' for his Tante Joan," announced the girl.

namesake, heading him off as he was about to slip upstairs to take a look at his sleeping boy, and then settle down in his room with a book, "here's the question: *Can you dope out a scheme that's any improvement on the present bum arrangement?*" And Artie looked as though he were sure he had offered a clincher.

"Well, Artie," Randall patiently answered, as they seated themselves about the moonlit piazza and sipped the black coffee which the butler was dispensing, "I couldn't 'dope out' a *worse* scheme than the present chaotic condition, that's sure."

"But, uncle, the thing about the muckrakers that makes me sick is that there's hardly one among them that wouldn't do just what a Rockefeller has done if he had the chance and the brains."

"Exactly. That's just the point. *Therefore* we must inaugurate a new social order, in which such perverted

creatures are not, as now, inevitable. And, my boy, don't make the mistake of thinking that it takes a great intellect to be a great financier. Commercial acumen isn't intellect. It's a common order of mind that can be sufficiently interested in mere money-making to pile up a huge fortune. It takes not brains, but cunning—and a willingness to sacrifice everything good in life, friends, relatives, honor, culture, for one thing—making money."

"Now, do you know," softly Catherine's deep, musical voice arrested the attention of all, "it seems to me so very much worse to rob a man of his good name than to take his goods and chattels from him. What right has any one to hold up to contumely a great public benefactor like Mr. Rockefeller or Mr. Carnegie? It is not only impertinent, it is malicious, the way the envy of the masses has maligned our great capitalists!"

"They have condemned, not 'ma-

ligned' them. You don't malign a man by telling the truth about him."

"What proof is there that the things they say *are* the truth?"

"The things they say' are not matters of opinion, but of recorded fact. However, it isn't the individual millionaire that should be condemned, but, as I said, a social state that makes such perverted creatures inevitable. It is the root of the evil we want to get at."

"And that means a reconstruction of society?" asked Artie.

"I think so."

"How can you believe in a reform," broke in Sally, "that is based on the discontent of the weak with the success of the strong?"

"And that is ushered in," reiterated Catherine, "by the slandering of all our big men by their inferiors?"

"You may recall," said Randall coolly, "Jesus' scathing denunciations of the 'whited sepulchers' of His time, calling them 'a generation of vipers.' I confess His feeling toward the Pharisees is mine toward some modern philanthropists. I feel nothing but disgust for the hypocrisy—often unconscious hypocrisy, I admit—that poses as philanthropy, while the whole life of the 'philanthropist' is based, not on love, but on the exploiting of the masses whom he afterward wants to patronize with gifts—with what he can't use—and call this patronage 'philanthropy'! I tell you," he concluded deliberately, as he rose to go away, "there's no use talking. There is no possibility of bolstering up any kind of an argument to prove that the present order is even *decent*, let alone just; an order of things that allows a few men to steal billions, then dole it out in barrels full to stay the evil they've been permitted to create!"

He thrust his hands into his pockets, and strolled away, amid the silence of all, toward the door at the far end of the piazza.

But before he was out of earshot the silence was broken by the voice of Bappis' nurse, who had come out to the piazza to speak to Mrs. McCord; and

Randall, about to step into the house, paused an instant.

"Bappis is bawlin' for his Tante Joan," announced the girl.

Joan, instantly rising to obey the summons of her tyrannical nephew-by-adoption, was instantly stopped by Mrs. McCord.

"Not to-night, Joan."

Joan obediently reseated herself.

"But," persisted the maid, "Bappis says he won't stop bawlin' till he *has* her, because she promised if he was good this afternoon she'd stay with him to-night until he was asleep."

"I did promise him, Cousin Sally," Joan acknowledged. "Would I better keep my promise?" she suggested hesitatingly.

"Go and tell Bappis," Mrs. McCord ordered the maid, without replying to Joan, "that if he 'bawls' any more his Aunt Sally or his father will come to him!"

Joan, of course submitting, sank back again in her chair; and the maid went away to deliver her message to a boy outraged with a sense of having been deceived and defrauded.

Randall, meditatively going into the house, made his way upstairs to console his son.

CHAPTER IV.

Randall was not a little astonished when, upon presenting himself at his boy's bedside, he was given to understand that even *his* society, heretofore so highly appreciated by his son, could not compensate the child for his bitter disappointment in being cheated of his promised nightly visit from "Tante Joan." He marveled that so weak a character as Joan Laird appeared to be should have gained such hold upon the fancy of a child like Bappis, who was wont to sense weakness as a cat senses a mouse, and to play with it about as ruthlessly.

"But she's the only person *he'll* be good for," the nurse told him. "He knows he's got to be, or she won't be his 'mother' any more."

"His 'mother'? Hm-m!"

Randall was half ashamed of himself for the suspicion the word roused in him of deep and dark designs on the part of that little cringing and most harmless-looking young woman.

"Is she subtle enough to realize," he wondered, as he sat down in a big rocking-chair, with Bappis in his arms, "that if there is any avenue of approach to me it is through—well, through the very route she is taking?"

With a quite impersonal, psychological interest, he fell to speculating about the girl. Wasn't it possible that one who could manage to keep herself installed as a visitor from year's end to year's end in a succession of most comfortable homes, and to be tastefully gowned on no apparent income, would be acute in seeing her opportunity in other directions? But if her "motherliness" to Bappis was not disinterested, wasn't it odd that the child himself could be so taken in? For Randall had a large faith in the unerring instinct of childhood to feel insincerity.

So little, however, did he regard himself as a matrimonial prize that it seemed to him she must surely have gumption enough to know that damaged matrimonial goods like himself were not worth such a waste of histrionic talent, and that an equal amount of energy expended elsewhere—on Ned or Artie, for instance—might bring more profitable returns. Judging, though, from her total lack of effort in their direction, she did not seem to think them within the range of her possibilities. In his modesty it did not occur to him that she might consider him a far higher stake for the exercise of her "histrionic talents."

Well, at all events, the calculations of the young lady—if, indeed, she *was* calculating on being Bappis' "mother"—missed their mark by just one point, though that a rather essential one; namely, her assumption that he was a fish that *could* be baited. She might as well spare herself her pains. However, as Bappis profited by her misguided efforts to fix her own fortunes, far be it from him to go out of his way to un-deceive her.

"Obber!" the now-pacified boy in his arms suddenly broke in upon his thoughts. "I want to ask you something."

"Well, Bapp?"

"Obber, did my mother die?"

Randall did not answer at once. He could not. The hour he had long dreaded—in which the inevitable questioning on the part of a wronged child must be met—had struck. It was the first time in three years and a half that Bappis had mentioned his mother.

"No, Bappis."

"Then where is she?"

"She went away."

"Where to?"

"She went home to her own mother and father."

"But why doesn't she live with us—like other boys' mothers live with them, Obber?"

"She—prefers to live with her parents, Bappis."

"Why doesn't she come to see us? Or why don't we go to see her?"

No answer.

"Is my mother a *bad* lady?"

"Your mother, Bappis, is a very, very good woman. And she loves you."

"Then why did she go away? And why doesn't she come back?"

"Well, Bappis, she doesn't like *me*!" Randall answered, reluctantly enough, though he had long ago decided that as Bappis must ultimately be told the truth, he should be gradually prepared for it from the moment that he began to ask questions.

"But *why*, Obber?" the boy asked wonderingly. "All the *other* ladies like you!"

"Bappis, would you like to leave me and go to your mother?"

"Couldn't we all live together, Obber?" asked Bappis wistfully.

"Your mother will not live with me, Bappis, though she very, very much wants her little boy. Would you leave me and go to her?"

"Could I come back to you?"

"If you went to her she would never, never let you come back to me."

"Then I won't ever go to her! I don't *like* her, Obber!"

"But she loves you, Bappis, and she is good. When you are older Obber will tell you all about it. You are too little to understand now. But always remember—your mother is good—and she loves you."

"If she doesn't love you, too, the way Aunt Sally likes Uncle Hubert, then I think she isn't *not* a good lady!"

"Believe Obber, Bappis. When you are older, you will understand."

"Well, anyway"—the child turned his head sleepily upon his father's breast—"I've got Tante Joan now. Wouldn't it be nice, Obber, if *she* was my mother?"

His eyes closed. And as Randall, his face white and strained from the sudden shock of this little catechism, gazed down upon the sleeping boy, the wild idea came to him that "Tante Joan," having hypnotized the child, spoke through him for the working out of her subtle schemes! That by means of that strange occultism, the power of "suggestion," she was endeavoring to weave her web about both father and son!

"My nerves must be playing me tricks!" he scoffed at his own sinister fancy, as, rising with the boy in his arms, he carried him back to his bed.

A few moments later, he strolled out again to the piazza; not, however, joining the company he had abandoned just after dinner, for it had since been formidably augmented by two motor loads of visitors from neighboring suburban homes. Seated alone in the shadow of a dark end of the piazza, he lit his pipe and smoked, unobserved, as he thought with mingled bitterness and stoicism of the subject of his little talk with Bappis—though occasionally his weary mind wandered from this haunting theme to a contemplation of the gayly chattering party at the moonlit end of the long, old rambling house.

He had not been there long when he saw Catherine Tyson extricate herself, in a cool and leisurely manner, from the group of admiring males, who surrounded her as flies about sugar, and stroll away from them into the house, her long green skirts trailing gracefully after her. Randall's eyes followed appreciatively her beautiful lines as she

moved, her splendid shoulders, slim waist, and long sweep of limb.

"Gods! She's a handsome woman! No wonder Sally thinks she only has to exhibit her to have me fall right in with her idea!"

He rose to knock the ashes from his pipe over the piazza railing, and as he turned to sit down again, there at his elbow stood the beautiful object of his mental comment. She had gone in one door and come out by another at his end of the house, ostensibly to join him. Had she, then, seen him sitting in the shadow, and deliberately detached herself from the rest to come to him? He had supposed himself invisible here, or he would have chosen another place.

"So your rôle now is to be a reformer, is it?" she pleasantly inquired, as though taking up the talk where it had been dropped just after dinner.

Her air of confidence, as she settled herself comfortably against the railing of the piazza, suggested that no doubt he fully appreciated the unaccustomed honor she conferred. There she missed it, to be sure; but if he was too indifferent to feel flattered, he did feel, he admitted, both curious and interested. No one could help finding a woman interesting who was so free from self-consciousness and affectation as Catherine Tyson was; with a manner almost dogged in its absolute naturalness. Her honesty was, indeed, two-thirds of her charm. She might be capable of villainy and possibly of cruelty—but she would perform it daringly, openly. No coward, she! Yet, withal, one felt she was not without subtlety. A curiously arresting personality!

"A reformer? I am hardly so ambitious," he replied, "or so self-righteous. You don't mind my smoking?"

"No, I'm not a reformer."

He drew on his pipe without replying.

"I do not believe, you know," she went on, "that the 'idle rich' you so enjoy raking, who contribute the funds by which philanthropy can give a grip to the helpless, do it from any but the purest motives."

"Yes?" he said politely.

"I see that you are one of those perfectly maddening men who will not take a woman seriously—as a creature who thinks!"

"Women don't think. They dress."

"You have been unfortunate in the women you have known."

"I beg you won't let it distress you, my dear young lady!"

Looking rather baffled at the unaccustomed experience of having the rare favor of her society treated nonchalantly, she nevertheless, after an instant, persisted.

"You really think we'd be happy in a social state where every one was on a level?"

"Happy?" Pardon me, but I suspect you don't begin to know the real meaning of the word."

"I'm having a pretty good time in my ignorance."

"I am sure you are."

"Well? Where ignorance is bliss!"

"Life would seem to hold something more important for us than just having a good time," he said musingly.

"Well, then, what *does* life mean to you?" she humored him.

"To me? I don't count, you know—having made pretty much of a mess of it."

"Most people make a mess of it, for that matter. Are there any all-round successful lives?"

"To most of us," he slowly answered, betrayed at last into serious discussion with her, "life is, I suppose, just a compromise with one's ideals; a putting up with second best. Yet there are a few rare men who do hold on to their youthful ideals to the very end. And what gods they seem to the rest of us!"

"What bores, rather. Reformers, who disapprove of everything that's comfortable! You have not compromised with your ideals, or you wouldn't be such a—what Artie calls a 'knocker'! Do you know I do hate a knocker!"

"I shall try to bear up under it."

She looked up at him derisively.

"Anything more conscious of its dignity and its superiority!"

"Meaning me? I don't seem to see myself so, really!"

"A 'knocker' must feel that he knows so much more than the rest of established society, Judge Randall."

"What is a knocker, Miss Tyson? A man who has the insight to realize the evils of his day, and the courage to rise up and denounce them. Yes, the world has always hated the knocker. So much so that it crucifies him. Did you ever chance to read the dedication of George Cabot Lodge's drama, 'Cain'? '*To the Deathless Memory of Jesus of Nazareth, Seer and Sayer of Truth, Who Was Believed Only By the Poor and Outcast, Who Was Recognized By All Reputable and Respectable People as the Avowed Enemy of Law, Order, and Religion, and Who Was At Last Brought to His Death by the Priesthood of the Orthodox Church, Through the Operation of the Established Courts of Social Justice, This Poem is Inscribed With Measureless Love.*'"

Before Catherine could answer, her attention was arrested by the approach of her mother strolling down the long piazza on the arm of Joan Laird; Catherine and Randall, standing in shadow, were not visible at their end of the porch until the other two were close upon them.

Randall noticed that Catherine looked annoyed and bored at the impending interruption, and as he never for a moment gave her credit for sharing Sally's ambition to make her Bappis' stepmother, he wondered why she should wish to prolong a talk which only revealed how hopelessly they differed about everything under the sun.

He was also not oblivious—keenly observant as he always was—to the sudden gleam of satisfaction in Mrs. Tyson's shallow eyes as she caught sight of them together, and her instant motion to draw Joan away with her. But he went forward immediately to offer the matron a chair, and, not waiting for her to decline, placed the only other available chair at the service of Joan. Stepping back to his place by the porch railing, he reached Catherine's side just as she, slightly raising herself to sit on

the railing, deliberately rested her two daintily slipped feet on the chair placed for Joan, as though quite unconscious of the girl's insignificant presence.

"One moment!" Randall, addressing Joan, instantly stepped forward again. "I'll bring a chair from the house."

"No, thank you," Joan's mild voice stopped him. "I am going upstairs—to get Mrs. Tyson a wrap."

"If you would be so sweet and dear!" Mrs. Tyson called after her retreating figure as it passed through the door close by; while Randall found and brought forward another chair against her return.

"Mamma!" Catherine spoke to her mother in a tone of annoyance.

"Why did you bring her here?" She turned in sudden appeal to Randall. "Do take me away before she comes back! I can't abide her!"

"Oh, come!" he demurred good-naturedly. "She's just saved you a trip upstairs for your mother's wrap."

"Yes, she acts like a lady's maid, and expects to be treated as one of us. I simply cut her!"

"So I observe."

"But, dear love," protested Mrs. Tyson, quick to scent Randall's distaste for such ruthless slighting of the girl, and eager to counteract the unfortunate impression she feared her daughter was making, "of course Joan expects to be treated as an equal—a Laird, you know, and her mother a Lee!"

"And Sally's guest," Randall gravely added.

"A self-invited one, Judge Randall," Catherine returned, coloring under his covert criticism, though quite ignoring



"Odd, isn't it, that she's not bored by so much of the little man's society?"

her mother's protest. "It isn't as though Cousin Sally asked her here."

"My love!" Mrs. Tyson feebly tried to check her, though very obviously afraid of her.

"But," Randall answered, "if Sally didn't want her, her inviting herself would not *bring* her here. Sally isn't that sort, you know—to have people about her that she doesn't want."

Except that he always did incline to befriend the under dog, he rather wondered at his instinct to defend Joan, of whom he was himself thinking that it was her overworked, neglected mother to whom she should be giving these services she so abjectly offered to those who scorned her for them. Mrs. Tyson, for instance, was neither old nor weak, but as well able as Joan herself to go upstairs for her wrap. Was it likely that the girl fetched and carried like that for her own mother the little time she spent with her?

"Mother, dear!" cried Catherine. "I really came down here to Judge Randall to get away from Joan Laird's toadying. When she comes back with your wrap, please take her away!"

"Certainly, my love," Mrs. Tyson acquiesced nervously; "though I am sure, dearest, she is quite harmless, and wouldn't annoy you for the world if she realized how sensitive you are!"

"Oh, don't be so ridiculous, mamma, dear!"

"But the child really means to be kind, I think, and attentive to every one, my dear, and— Ah!" She lowered her voice. "Here she comes."

She rose at once to carry out her daughter's injunctions.

"Thank you, dear child," she said, as Joan laid the wrap about her shoulders. "So kind of you, I'm sure, though of course I could have rung for a maid; but most of them have gone to bed, I suppose, by this time, and it's so comfy to have some one by like you," she rattled on, "to anticipate one's needs, and save lazy people like me from the least exertion of any kind whatever! I should be so perfectly charmed to have you visit *me* now and then, my dear—when my daughter is away from home—just to have you 'round, you know, the way you are here."

"Thank you!" replied Joan tentatively, almost expectantly, a deep color dyeing her sensitive face.

Why should a girl of such tough nerve have a sensitive face, Randall wondered, observing at the same time what an excellent foil she was, in the extreme simplicity she always affected in dress, to the elaborate elegance of Catherine's costumes. The two maidens did certainly set each other off. Joan, it seemed to him, was extraordinarily clever in her way of dressing, this conspicuous simplicity being not only less expensive, but exactly suited to her childlike slimness and delicacy.

"Now, mamma, don't *drop* that wrap!" Catherine admonished, apropos of her parent's unconquerable tendency to shed her belongings like a molted fowl. "It's the best one you have, and it's awfully becoming to me."

"I'll be careful, dearest—oh!" she suddenly exclaimed with a quite infantile glee. "I've an idea! It would be a comfort to you, Catherine, dear, I'm sure, while you are at Bar Harbor next month, to know that I had Miss Laird with me, *wouldn't* it, darling? Some one to see that I don't drop things about and to remind me of things I'm so apt to forget! You could feel, dear, that I was being daughtered almost as sweetly as my own big girl—"

"Oh, mamma!" Catherine cut it short in frank disgust. "I would suggest," she added mildly, "that you ask Miss Laird her terms for her services as companion."

"I shall be pleased to come to you as your *guest*, Mrs. Tyson," Joan hastily answered, as though eager to clinch the thing, her face now very pale in the moonlight. "In Miss Tyson's absence," she added.

"How lovely of you, dear! Shall we walk about again?" Mrs. Tyson hastily added, slipping her arm through Joan's, evidently afraid to risk Catherine's further involving herself. How blind her high-spirited daughter was, to be sure, to her own best interests! Why couldn't she be more tactful?

Joan acquiesced, and they strolled away.

"There now!" Catherine looked up at Randall with a smile that showed the beautiful white evenness of her teeth. "Am I right about her? Accepting an invitation like that almost before it is quite offered! I actually believe she would have nerve enough to visit us when I'm home!"

"That *would* take 'nerve,'" Randall significantly admitted, though in his heart he was disagreeably shocked that even Joan Laird could go to such lengths in self-humiliation. Surely the tone and atmosphere of such a creature couldn't be the best association in the world for Bappis!

Catherine's musical laugh rippled from between her red lips.

"You are delightful!" she said. "You know I'm not used to being taken as you take me. I suppose I *have* been awfully spoiled. It's rather a refresh-

ing novelty to find myself 'sat on.' I suppose you get so used to bullying criminals that, Southerner though you are, you forget how to be suave to ladies."

"Sentiment, I admit, has long since taken a permanent back seat in my life."

"Permanent?"

"You might as well try to revive a dead cat. It took a lot of shots to kill it, but it's dead to stay."

"You can't be sure."

"Where there's no life there's no hope."

"You can't convince me that there's no life. You are too young, too successful."

He smoked without replying.

"Let the right person take you in hand, and you will find yourself as much alive as ever you were."

"Far be it from me to discourage you!"

"'Discourage' me?"

"From taking me in hand."

"Thank you. I'm not applying for the job. You'd like to be taken in hand, would you?"

"If it would amuse you, I shouldn't dream of objecting. It's only fair to warn you, however, that you'd be sadly wasting your time."

"I wonder whether you and I know what we are trying to talk about!" she exclaimed.

"I suppose *you* do. I'm not sure I do."

"Well," she conceded, "I do like your sincerity! I am—perhaps unfortunately—incapable of pretense myself."

"Your worst enemy could not accuse you of pretending, Miss Tyson."

"You don't like me," she cheerfully pronounced. "I ought to be complimented that you'd take the trouble! So great a man!" She laughed. "And so indifferent to most of our feeble sex!"

"Ah!" He suddenly bent his head to listen as a child's cry came from a window above. "That's Bappis, isn't it? He can't be well to be waking so often!" he exclaimed in quick anxiety. "He's fretted himself into a fever because Sally wouldn't let that girl go to him!

Excuse me, please? Good night!" And before she could answer, he had hurried indoors, and was bounding upstairs three steps at a time to his boy.

Catherine, sitting very still where he had left her, gazed thoughtfully out over the motionless, spectral treetops of the lawn. She admitted to herself that never in her life had she felt so on her mettle to win a man's notice and regard. Though she did not share Sally's matrimonial ambitions, she was too keen not to be aware of them. It was the sportsman's instinct for the hunt, the gambler's love of the game, that stirred her as she had never been stirred by easy prey, and that made her, if Randall had only known it, a protagonist he would better avoid than brave—a fact that he was to learn very soon, to his chagrin and self-disgust.

CHAPTER V.

It was a distinct blow to Judge Randall to be plaintively asked by his son, the next day, *when* he intended to go back to the city. "Because you know, Obber, as long as you're here, Aunt Sally won't let Tante Joan be my chum."

"And you want Obber to go? You like Tante Joan better?"

Bappis buried his face against his father's breast and hugged him tight, but he made no denial. Randall wondered whether this were not worse than his usually painful partings from the boy.

"You see," Bappis murmured, ashamed of his apostasy, "when you go, Aunt Sally will let Tante Joan play with me again, and put me to bed, and tell me stories, and be my squaw!"

Randall put it to his sister when he found an opportunity to talk with her alone that Sunday morning.

"What's your idea, Sally?"

"I thought you wouldn't want Joan to monopolize him while you were here," she answered, coloring, for evasion or subterfuge was not natural to her. "And I do think she spoils him beyond everything. She certainly doesn't do him any good."

"She seems to make him happier."

To insure their privacy—a thing not easily found in this houseful of guests and servants—he had invited her to come to his bedchamber. It was a large room, furnished in beautiful old carved and inlaid mahogany. Several generations of Randalls had been born on the huge four-posted bed which filled one-third of the room, and which was known in the family as “the ten-acre lot.”

Sitting in easy-chairs before one of the two French windows that opened on a piazza, the brother and sister, as they talked, gazed out upon the dancing waters of the beautiful Chesapeake.

“But, Arthur,” Mrs. McCord argued, “Joan indulges Bappis in everything that ought to be curbed in a child. She even encourages him in his really demoralized taste for playing at being a highwayman, a bloody Indian chief, any and everything in the whole category of crime and depravity! He never wants to play being anything good and decent.”

“And she encourages this—depraved taste?”

“She says it’s ‘not depraved, only masculine’—at which, of course, Hubert and the boys chaff her unmercifully. The only attention the men ever pay her is to poke fun at her.”

“Yet she’s not bad-looking, is she?”

“She’s too shy and retiring—she bores them. Except when occasionally she unwittingly makes them laugh.”

“You are sure she’s quite unconscious of it when she drives such a sly knife as that—not depraved, only masculine?”

“It’s her unconsciousness that makes her amusing.”

“You were ever a trusting, unsuspicious soul, Sally!”

“But seriously, I do think she doesn’t do Bappis any good. She makes him so much more selfish, Arthur. One weakly unselfish person always makes a dozen selfish ones. She has us all imposing on her.”

“‘Unselfish’? You surely don’t think all this apparent unselfishness in the way she waits on you all is purely disinterested kindness of heart? I con-

fess I don’t believe she’s as stupid as that. She doesn’t *look* that stupid? And you yourself admitted yesterday that she made herself useful to feather her nest.”

“But since when have unselfishness and kindness of heart been synonymous with stupidity?” Sally inquired, smiling, relieved to find him taking this view of the girl’s attentions to his son, though she was not sure just what he meant to imply.

“It was you,” he answered, “who spoke of ‘weakly unselfish people.’ Her performances would seem to me idiotic if I didn’t think them self-interested! And indeed I prefer a villain to a fool any day.”

“And her running after and waiting on your boy—that, too, seems to you—‘self-interested’?” she laughed, giving him a quick, keen glance. “I myself have never given her credit, I confess, for such guile!”

“I was not thinking so much of what she does for Bappis, as of the way she fetches and carries for all you able-bodied grown-ups.”

“But wouldn’t her giving herself so to Bappis come under the same head?” She was determined to understand how he stood on that point.

“Well, you know, dear, I think Bappis a very lovable and interesting child when he’s taken in the right way. It doesn’t seem to me altogether impossible that the girl might get as much as she gives out of their ‘intimacy,’ as Bappis calls it. I wouldn’t interfere with it,” he quietly added, “if I were you—even when I am here. It makes my visits unwelcome to Bappis, at which I am foolish enough to feel a bit hurt.”

She concealed the start this change of front gave her.

“He calls her self-interested and a villain, but ‘prefers a villain to a fool,’ and he believes—or says he does—in the sincerity of her goodness to Bappis; and doesn’t want it interfered with! I’m afraid of all this!”

She made no verbal reply to him, but her swift mental comment was a determination to straightway present

Joan with a mileage book, together with a suggestion that she "move on"—though at the same time her heart misgave her at the thought of Bappis' grief, rage, and unmanageableness in the event of the abrupt departure of his chum.

Mrs. McCord was herself too truly a mother not to understand, with a passing regret at her own inability to love the child, why he should be so crazy about Joan; for the girl seemed to her really to mother him in a way he had not known since the catastrophe four years ago which had so ruthlessly torn him from his own mother's arms. Sally was too sincere to be readily suspicious of duplicity in others, and she did not believe in her heart that Joan was either subtle or daring enough to be cherishing any ulterior matrimonial ambition in her devotion to Bappis. Otherwise she would long since have sent her about her business, as indeed she had been tempted to do at any rate, for fear of the possible effect upon Arthur of her mothering of his boy. And now it looked as though her fear had been justifiable.

But the imperative necessity of separating Bappis from his friend was not a pleasant thing to face.

As she did not reply to his last remark, Randall, after a silence, introduced with evident reluctance another matter about which he felt obliged to speak with her and for which, indeed, he had invited her to this strict privacy.

She knew from sad experience the only theme he ever discussed with her behind a locked door, and now as he broached it, the slim white hands folded loosely in her lap were involuntarily clasped firmly to stay the nervous tremor that shook her whenever this intimate and harassing subject was haled forth.

"I had a letter in this morning's mail," he began, and she did not have to look at him to know that the color had left his face.

"From Laura?"

He nodded.

"The same old story, I suppose?"

"A reply to mine in which I made a condition—you will think I was mad!"

"You didn't again ask her to come back to you?"

"I told her that as I would not part with Bappis, the question for her to decide was whether her aversion to me was stronger than her love for her son, who sorely needed her; whether, for the boy's sake, she would consent, now, after four years' separation, to remarriage."

"Oh! But don't you *hear* the wild gossip that such a step would rouse, Arthur, dear? And you are only just beginning to live down the speculations of all the scandalmongers of Maryland as to the cause of your mysterious divorce!"

"I have that at least to be grateful to Laura for—that her native dignity, her perfect breeding, saved us both from scandalmongers."

"Yes," Sally reluctantly conceded; "if she had not kept so perfectly quiet about it all, I suppose there'd have been no political career for you, dear—would there?"

"It was not, however"—he shrugged, a faint bitterness in his tone—"for my sake, you know, that she kept quiet. It was her pride—and for Bappis' sake. And," he said abruptly, "it is of Bappis I am thinking now—certainly not of myself—when I ask her to return to me. And I can't help believing," he added, his tone deepening, "that, much as she thinks she would compromise and humiliate herself by returning to me, she'd really be far less unhappy, poor thing, if she came back. I wrote her that if her self-love—her self-respect and her dignity that she thinks have been so outraged—are greater than her love for our child, then I feel that my larger love, which is ready to sacrifice anything for him, ready to humble myself before her after all that has occurred; ready to resume a union which gave me so little—if I am ready to do this, and she is not, then I am justified in keeping him. For, by Heaven, Sally, think how much greater would be my sacrifice than hers in such



There, under the ample shade of a huge old tree, sat Joan Laird, her back against the tree, and Bappis, fast asleep, lying beside her, his head in her lap.

a reunion! What a perdition to live daily in the presence of her undying sense of injury! To be tolerated as a necessary evil by one's wife! Yet—to make up to Bappis—I'd bear it. If she can't make an equal sacrifice—" He waved his hand in conclusive dismissal of the matter.

"And her answer, Arthur?"

"She will not come back to me."

"You might know, dear," Sally sighed, "that nothing *could* move her obstinacy."

"But she bends her pride to actually plead—can you hear Laura pleading?—that I give her Bappis," he said sadly. "How she has suffered, Sally!"

"You sympathize with her too much. Think how devoid of sympathy with you she always was!"

"But Bappis was and is her heart's blood! You know that. And you know how he worshipped her—and now he is forgetting her! I would do anything in the world to make up to her for the unhappiness I've caused her—except the one thing she asks of me—give up Bappis."

"If it is a question of the boy's own good?" Sally suggested hesitatingly.

"In the long run I am convinced that Bappis needs me more. In the long run, you understand—as he grows up."

"Then you will refuse even

her—'pleading,' of course?"

"It is hard to!"

"But you will, I know."

He rose abruptly, and paced the floor.

"She cannot care for him as I do,"

he said, with repressed passion, "or she would stop at nothing to get him! If our positions were reversed, if she kept him from me, I'd get him, by God, if I had to kill her! But she—poor little narrow soul!—she won't even tell a lie to get him! I offer to send him to her for a visit if she will promise to return him; or to let her have him for six months of the year, if at the end of the six months she'll send him back. I know how absolutely I could trust her promise. Well, she won't promise. Why, in her place I'd promise anything! I'd respect her if she'd lie to me and

deceive me to get him! But I tell you she cares more for her pride, and her dignity, and her petty puritan ideas of right than for her child! She insists she must have him absolutely; to take him out of my life, away from my influence. Which means that he would grow up with the teaching that his father was a low-down voluptuary! Forgive me, Sally!" he impatiently interpolated. "But the thing maddens me! I tell you this matter of divorce is no simple thing when there is a child in the case!"

"Brother, dear!" came from the depths of Sally's heart in tenderest sympathy as she looked up into his white, drawn face, her own full of distress.

He paused at her side, and passively held the hand she slipped into his.

"What am I to do?" he dully asked. "It is hideous to deny her! But what else can I do? There's no least hope of her ever changing. You know her—when once she takes a stand."

"Then let her suffer the penalty of her stubbornness."

He did not answer at once, as again he paced the length of his room, his hands clasped behind him.

At last once more he stopped beside her.

"Sally, there's just one thing—Bappis must be guarded, you know. Though Laura won't lie to me, she'll steal him if she can. She has admitted she will. If she once did get him, I'd never get him back—unless—well, it would make me murderous, Sally, to lose him!" he said, with a gleam in his eye that made her heart turn cold. "So, if you don't want our name disgraced by a crime, keep a close watch!"

"You know that I will, dear!"

"Thank you! You will think me mad when I tell you it has crossed my mind that this Joan, devoting herself so extraordinarily to Bappis, may be an agent of Laura's!"

"Arthur!" she exclaimed, in genuine alarm. "You *will* become nervously upset if you let yourself go like this! Joan never saw Laura in her life!"

"My fear night and day is that his mother may steal him. God knows I

wouldn't blame her. But it must not happen, Sally!"

"It won't happen through *my* neglect, Arthur!"

"You will be very watchful?"

"You may trust me."

"I know that I may, dear, bless you!" he said gratefully. Then, with strange abruptness, he turned away from her, suddenly looking very tired. "That is all, then, Sally—I won't detain you any longer."

She rose to go.

"Must I tell the chauffeur that you go into town to-night, dear, or to-morrow morning?"

"With Hubert and Ned in the morning."

"And you will be out again next Saturday?"

"Not until the week after. I shall be kept busy in Annapolis."

"Very well," she answered, feeling a quick relief in knowing that the ordeal of sending Joan away could be postponed for nearly two weeks. On no account must the girl be here when her brother came again. Her relations with Bappis impressed Arthur quite too seriously.

CHAPTER VI.

"The weaker sex' and the 'lords of creation'! Whoever invented such misleading phrases?" Judge Randall inquired derisively, when on that Sunday afternoon, through no fault of his own, as he assured himself, he found himself alone with Catherine Tyson on the shore of the bay in front of the terraced lawn at Beechlands. "The weaker sex indeed! We are puppets and pawns in the hands of you women!"

"You *are*, for the most part," agreed Catherine. "If ever I have the fortune to meet a man whom I can't lead by the nose—well, he may have *me*!"

"Then I've lost my chance, haven't I?"

"I've not been aware of pulling *you* about by a chain. What, by the way, if I may inquire, calls forth your derision as to 'the weaker sex'?"

They were both in riding habit, having just returned from a long canter up

the beach. One of the stablemen had taken away their horses, and they had, by common consent, strolled down to the shore instead of going at once into the house.

It had been at Sally's instigation that they had gone out together this afternoon, Randall having welcomed her proposal as a way of escape from the misery of his broodings; and it was not until now, as he felt a sense of pleasure steal over him in the lovely day, the soft air, the beauty of Catherine's fine face under her jaunty cap, and the alluring charm of her "stunning figure," as he mentally pronounced it, in her close-fitting dark-blue habit, that he began to realize, with some amusement, how he was being worked into Sally's scheme.

Naturally, then, he could not reply with candor to Miss Tyson's question.

"I'm afraid if you wait to find a man whom *you* can't 'lead by the nose,' you'll die 'an unappropriated blessing,'" he evaded.

"You making gallant speeches! And to me!"

"A European looking on at our American life usually decides that the sole purpose of an American man's existence is to make things easy and comfortable for women."

"A worthy purpose, I'm sure. In Europe it's usually the other way about, don't you think so?"

"It may be in some countries. But here in the United States—tell me!—what does the woman of our class, the leisure class of women, contribute to the *summum bonum*, since it has gone out of fashion for her to be the mother of a family?"

"She contributes all that is comfortable and lovely in domestic life."

"Yes?" he mused. "Well!" He dropped the subject, and suddenly brought from his pocket a handful of yellow tickets. "By the way, will you be so good as to dispose of these? You and Sally? A vaudeville entertainment at her church in town. My laundress, who is a member of the church, bullied me into buying a fistful of them."

"Your washwoman a member of St.

John's? She misled you. She may belong to the mission."

"You don't have that kind of people at St. John's? How do you keep them out? Such people, to be sure, have no business with religion, anyway, have they?"

"I see no necessity for their having their religion, any more than their meals, in close proximity to us. Why shouldn't they have their own churches?"

"Why indeed? The ethics Jesus taught would certainly not warrant the same church, let alone the same pew, for the lowly and the proud. Now, would they?"

"If it pleases you to be sarcastic," she smiled, with a lift of her eyebrows. "I don't see how a man of your brains can be a socialist—if you really are one. You seem to me to overlook so many unanswerable objections."

"For instance?"

"More government ownership would simply mean more opportunities for grafting."

"Under our present system undoubtedly. Those in power have such big stakes in bad government that, you'll observe, it is impossible for any 'reform' administration to outlast one term. Let us have a system in which there would be no big stakes in bad government."

"It wouldn't be possible. Another thing; socialism would foster laziness, thriftlessness."

"Our present system fosters idleness and waste only in the rich. Under socialism only the industrious would be cared for, of whatever class. The man who wouldn't work—and the woman, too—would have to starve."

"But," she objected, "socialism so serenely ignores the fact that there are many men of many minds. Even in the same family. Look at the difference, for instance, between your own nephews, Artie and Ned. Artie with his slang, his brusqueness, his manliness; and Ned with his elegant fastidiousness, his— Well!" She lifted her hands, as though to ward off a shock at the inexpressibleness of Ned. "Why, you know," she laughed, "Cousin Sally ad-

mitted to me to-day that Ned puts the ribbons in her underclothing for her!"

"Putting in ribbons is good enough for Ned."

"And writes poetry. Do you ever read Ned's poetry? And goes around telling people 'I'm a poet,' and offers them his verses to read. He writes poems to *me*. Want to hear one?"

She drew from her blouse pocket a fancifully lettered card, and read impressively:

"TO A SNOWDROP.

"The snowdrops have come out to-day

Regardless of the weather;

They nod in pantomimic play—

The snowdrops have come out to-day,

They bend beneath the north wind's sway

And softly sing together.

The snowdrops have come out to-day

Regardless of the weather."

"He ought to be stopped, judge!"

"Under socialism Ned would be a lady's maid, or a man milliner, instead of a lawyer and a poet—since every one would find his proper level. Oh!" He suddenly uttered a low exclamation as at this instant, far up on the beach, appeared Joan and Bappis in their bathing suits, stepping out into the water. "She's taking him out wading. Odd, isn't it, that she's not bored by so much of the little man's society?"

"Oh, I don't know—inasmuch as it's always in the public eye that she cultivates Bappis' society. You haven't observed that fact? It's been particularly patent since *you* came!" She looked up at him with amusement. "And then, too, Bappis is the only male creature who seems to care for *her* society!"

Randall, not replying, thoughtfully poked the sand with his riding crop.

"I notice," he presently remarked speculatively, "that the men who come here all seem to want to meet her, and then—when they've tried her out—drop her. Odd!"

"I haven't seen you 'trying her out.'"

"You keep me under your eye, do you?"

"Unless you've been doing it on the sly. And then, like the others, 'dropped her.'"

The tone of this remark was an inquiry. But he did not reply to it.

"You need to be under some one's eye," she added, "exposed as you are, poor 'pawn and puppet'—didn't you call yourself?—to the wiles of so many subtle Jezebels!" She lazily laughed. "By the way," she changed the subject, "I spent the morning in my room wrestling with the book I heard you telling Cousin Sally you admired so hugely. I was curious, you see, to learn what your taste was in the way of novels."

"You mean Henry James' 'The Wings of a Dove'?"

"If that's the kind of a novel you like!" She rolled up her eyes in despair. "Why, I've been through at least eight chapters to find out the result of an interview the heroine had with her physician, and I don't know yet whether he decided anything was the matter with her. Though the eight chapters talk of nothing else! The way your favorite author can cover reams of paper without coming to a point and *saying* anything! And I'm very anxious about this poor girl's health!"

"But, my dear young lady, you surely don't read Henry James to find out what's going on, I hope! Because never in the course of a two-volume novel does he, by any chance, let you know."

"What *does* he do, then, with his two volumes full of words?"

"What does he do? With a subtlety that's uncanny he makes living personalities move so vividly and vitally across his pages that you see the very whites of their eyes—you see them as in life, yet know just as much about them, no more, no less; though you are averse to know more, to know all!"

"You get all that out of him? I'll stick it out, then, to the bitter end of the two volumes, if my feeble intellect will bear the strain of his awful subtlety!"

"It's an acquired taste to like 'his awful subtlety.'"

"I shall never hope to get so far as to like it!"

"I think myself he overdoes it, to the point of making it lose its artistic quality. Of course, his fine shades of meaning could only be expressed by a com-

plex style, but it does seem to me at times that he could accomplish it without *quite* so much cumbersome machinery."

"It is surely an extremely silly style that makes one grope so hard for the meaning," insisted Catherine.

"I grant you his style does sometimes get in the way of one's catching any thought at all. And of course to that extent is inartistic. We must talk it over when you've finished 'The Wings of a Dove.'"

"But I leave in ten days, and you are not coming out again, are you, inside of two weeks?"

"I had not meant to. You'll be here next Saturday and Sunday?"

"Yes; until the fifteenth."

He gazed thoughtfully out across the shining waters of the bay under the late afternoon sun. But he did not say whether he would come.

"It is time for tea."

Catherine made a movement to rise, and he sprang up to give her his hand. Their eyes met as their fingers touched, and for an instant fire answered fire. Then, side by side, they strolled up the path to the house.

"You think you'll come again next week-end?" she asked.

"I don't know—though I *am* curious to hear what you'll have to say when you get to the end of volume two."

"Oh, what I'll have to say won't be worth your coming all the way from Annapolis to hear it. Well," she smiled, as they were parting in the hall, "we've had what Bappis calls 'a great time' this afternoon, haven't we?"

"Fine!"

His smile met hers. And then they went their separate ways to dress for the Sunday evening tea, which was one of the notably charming features of the summers at Beechlands, and at which every family of the countryside was invariably represented by one or two of its members.

CHAPTER VII.

Randall was too busy at the capitol, during the week that followed, to give any definite thought to the rather inter-

esting life at Beechlands just now, though he was dimly aware of it, from time to time, as a luminous background in his somber consciousness.

But when on the next Saturday afternoon, contrary to previous plans, he boarded the train at Annapolis for the little station from which he would walk to Beechlands, he had leisure, on the way, to speculate about a number of things that had been buzzing about in his brain demanding attention.

His decision to go to Beechlands to-day had been sudden, unpremeditated. At least not consciously premeditated. He seldom got down there more than once in two weeks, and he had told Sally definitely, when bidding her goodbye last Monday, that he would not come to-day. Why was he, then, going?

"Am I playing with fire?"

The McCords would not, of course, be expecting him. At least Sally would not. And Catherine Tyson would be the last one to suggest to his sister what he was sure that astute young woman did not doubt—the large improbability of a man's foregoing voluntarily his last chance of the season to enjoy her society, and her beauty, and her charm.

He hoped Sally, unaided by outside suggestion, would not be equally perspicuous. Bappis would be the sufferer if she were, for Randall was sure that Joan Laird would be sent away before he was again expected. That was one reason why he had not let them know he was coming. It would give Bappis a few days more of this extraordinarily valued new acquaintance.

He had reflected in the past week, off and on, upon Catherine's assertion that Joan's friendliness to Bappis was always "in the public eye." That Catherine herself believed her own statement he did not doubt. And Catherine was nothing if not observant. Yet he could not quite reconcile such a supposition with the boy's utter faith in Joan.

It was not until he was nearing his destination that he demanded of himself very definitely what it was really that was bringing him back a week before he ought to come? Was it for a fact,

in addition to his ever-present longing for Bappis, the rather persistent picture his mind had carried all the week of a gloriously beautiful woman on a horse; and her later transformation in a white evening gown, which had fairly carried him off his feet? Was it, in part, his rather keen interest in the prospective discussion with Miss Tyson of "The Wings of a Dove"? He *was* amusedly curious to hear how that piece of psychical analysis had affected her very matter-of-fact mentality. He carried with him in his suit case another two-volume novel, the one he considered the finest in James' "later style"—"The Golden Bowl"—which he would present to her if she had acquired the taste.

Was he, indeed, then, after four years of torpor, thawing out, and becoming susceptible again to a woman's charm? God forbid!

Upon his arrival at the small station near Beechlands, he was relieved to find no motor awaiting him, for this was sufficient evidence that Sally did not look for him.

The day was clear and hot, and he decided to take the circuitous path through the stretch of woodland, known as "Randall's Woods," that lay between the station and the outskirts of his sister's home.

He had reached the thickest part of the miniature forest, and was about a

half mile from the end of his walk, when a turn in the path over the side of a hill brought suddenly into view, far below at the foot of the slope, a sight which stopped him short. There, under the ample shade of a huge old tree, sat Joan Laird, her back against the tree, and Bappis, fast asleep, lying beside her, his head in her lap.

The suddenness of his thus coming upon these two, himself unheard and unseen, gave him a start that was like a sharp shock. He stood motionless as he looked down upon them, afraid to breathe lest he disturb that picture, though he was aware that even his footsteps could hardly be heard below there where they sat.

Joan, in a pink chambray frock trimmed with white, her arm laid along the length of Bappis' short body, while with the other hand she mechanically smoothed his cheek, looked such a picture of girlish innocence and sweetness that the hard lines of Randall's face softened as his eyes rested

upon her. Catherine's aspersion, "Always in the public eye," recurred to him. Joan could hardly have managed it so well as this—to intercept his unexpected return by a tableau in a secluded and unfrequented spot in the forest. The cleverest schemer in the world couldn't make Bappis go to sleep "on tap," without drugging him!



"Judge Randall," she said, her voice trembling,
"I wish I could do what you ask."

Deliberately choosing a point from which he could watch the unconscious pair below, without himself being seen, he cautiously seated himself.

Joan's countenance, her eyes downcast upon the boy's face, was sad and serious; yet her solitude here, with the sleeping child in her arms, seemed to release from her usually constrained exterior a soft, warm glow of utter womanliness.

It may have been a half hour that Randall sat there on the grassy hill slope, in silent contemplation of this picture upon which he had so surprisingly come. The time did not seem long to him, though he wondered that Joan did not grow restless. But pensive though she looked, she seemed very content to be sitting there in the still woodland, the sunshine glimmering through the big trees, the soft air on her cheek and hair, the child in her arms.

It occurred to him that it was odd she showed no sign of feeling his scrutiny upon her.

At last, when the shadows were beginning to lengthen a bit, Bappis stirred, yawned, stretched out his little legs and arms, and opened his eyes upon the face above him.

"Oh! I dreamed Aunt Sally sent you away, Tante Joan!" His chubby arms clasped and hugged her as though he feared she might escape him if he did not hold her tight.

"Not yet, honey."

Their voices reached Randall with remarkable distinctness.

"But you won't go, *will* you? You love me, and you'll stay by me, won't you?" he pleaded, with a wistfulness that stabbed his listening father with the sharp consciousness of his own responsibility for his boy's motherless childhood.

"Do I love you? Oh, Bappis!" she softly answered, as suddenly she snatched him to her breast, pressed his flushed little face against her neck, and kissed him with a passionate warmth which Randall knew, as he knew that his heart leaped at the sight, was as sincere, as spontaneous, as was the child's

feeling for her. Never again, after this instant, could he doubt the strange fact that this girl loved his little son with a motherliness as genuine as it was unaccountable. Why should she, with no appeal of kinship, love him like that? But the fact stood that she did. He could not think otherwise.

"Then you won't go away, will you, if you love me?" insisted Bappis, a note almost of dread in his voice.

She murmured an answer, as she held him close, which Randall did not hear.

"But Aunt Sally says," came Bappis' reply, "that you don't want to be with a little boy all the time; you want to be with the grown people."

"I'd rather be with you, Bappis, than with any one in the whole world!"

"Because you love me?"

"Because we love each other. You see, you're the only person here, Bappis, that really does want me."

"And you're the only one that wants me, and loves me."

"Except when your 'Obber' is here."

"But he isn't here hardly ever at all. And before you came I was always so lonesome! I can't bear it if you go away, Tante Joan!" he passionately protested. "I can't bear it *at all*!"

"I don't know how I'm going to bear it, Bappis."

"But, Tante Joan," Bappis suddenly demanded, in a puzzled tone, "you've got an own really mother, haven't you? Aunt Sally says you have. Why don't you live with her? Don't you love her?"

"Ye-yes, Bappis. Of course. But we haven't any home."

"And I haven't any *own* home, either. So I have to live at Aunt Sally's, and sometimes at Uncle Duncan's in Annapolis. Obber and I used to have a home, too, long ago, when I had an own mother."

"Bappis, do you remember your mother?"

"I don't remember her face," he answered slowly. "But I remember she liked me the way you do. Obber says she likes me *yet*. But she doesn't like him, and that's why she won't live with us. I don't see why any one would not like Obber, do you?"

"Of course I don't, dear."

"Oh!" He suddenly sprang to his feet, and faced her with sparkling eyes. "I know what! You ask Obber to get married to you the way he was to my mamma, and then you and I and Obber can all live together and have our really own home again! And your mother could come, too—if you'd promise to love me better than you love her!"

"But if Obber should refuse me, dear, I'm afraid I should find it embarrassing!" she demurely replied.

"I'll coax him for you! You just tell me if he says he won't, and I'll try to persuade him to!"

Joan suddenly sprang up, too, with a laugh, and shook out her skirts.

"I think we shall have to get up a different plan from that, honey, for staying together! Come, now, it's high time you got home for your bath."

"Will you bathe me?" he demanded aggressively. "Because the new maid came after luncheon, and I shan't let her bathe me!"

"Oh, did she?" said Joan, surprised. "I didn't know Aunt Sally had engaged another one. Are you sure, Bappis? Did you see her?"

"Oh, yes, I saw her. Will you bathe me?"

"Is she white or black?"

"I didn't notice!" he impatiently answered. "Are you going to bathe me, Tante Joan?"

"On one condition, Bappis."

"I promise, I promise!" he glibly affirmed. "What must I promise?"

"That when your Aunt Sally needs me, and I can't come to you, you won't howl."

"I won't promise that!"

"Yes, you will, honey—else I won't bathe you or come to you any time. You see, darling, Aunt Sally says I've got you so spoiled that every one in the house has to suffer for it. Now, if you want me to stay here, don't you see we must not let our being so fond of each other annoy your aunt, or——"

They had strolled on beyond the curve of the hill, and Randall heard no more.

As after a judicious time when they

were out of sight, he rose and followed, at a distance, the path they had taken, he tried to decide whether that "condition" to which she had endeavored to make Bappis subscribe, had been made in the interest of the child's proper discipline, or in the interest of their prolonged companionship; or of the peace of the household; or, as seemed likely, in that of Joan's own security at Beechlands.

He found himself wishing intensely that the latter supposition did not seem, in view of her situation here, the most probable. He hated to associate her pure and unselfish affection for his loved child with any thought of her miserable parasitism.

CHAPTER VIII.

However much Judge Randall might speculate as to the Machiavellian disposition of Joan Laird, he never for an instant attributed to Catherine Tyson any subtlety in having gone from Beechlands to spend the week-end at a neighboring estate, just on the eve of his arrival.

"We never dreamed you'd be here, Arthur, or I shouldn't have let her go." Mrs. McCord, also unsuspecting, candidly lamented this apparently lost opportunity. "But she'll be back Sunday afternoon, and you won't be going until Monday. I had just succeeded in persuading her to stay here over *next* week-end for your visit—and now you won't be here next week; it's *too* bad!"

"If she'll stay over, perhaps I *shall* come out again—for another canter up the beach," he consoled his sister, conscious that his own disappointment would have been a good deal keener but for the engrossing theme which his afternoon's walk through the woodland had given him to weigh and ponder.

"So Catherine didn't really look for me to-day," he said to himself, with masculine obtuseness, "and I'd have sworn she would. She's not so observant as I thought her, or she'd have seen I wouldn't be able to keep away! Damn the sex! Well, perhaps it's better she's not here," he decided, not realizing the

fact so clearly foreseen by the redoubtable Catherine that his chagrin at finding her flown would "lead him on" leagues beyond the point where her actual presence could have landed him.

However, there was something Miss Tyson had not foreseen, and that was that her new friend would, at the moment of facing his disappointment, be so distracted by another matter looming big on his horizon as somewhat to miss the sting of her carefully premeditated absence.

At dinner that evening Randall found himself distinctly annoyed at being seated where he could not watch Joan, for he wanted to consider her in the light of his afternoon's experience, her countenance, her movements, her hands, any and everything that might reveal her, inasmuch as her personality had undergone to-day a somewhat chameleon change of color in his mind.

After dinner his purpose to have a talk with her seemed also about to be foiled by her prompt disappearance, when he bethought him to intercept her in what was probably a stealthy visit to Bappis.

He was not mistaken. In her swift flight upstairs he managed to meet and stop her at the first landing.

"You are going to the boy?"

"Yes—I was," she faltered, a startled surprise in her childishly appealing eyes.

"I want to have a talk with you this evening if you will be so good as to allow me? Shall we meet in the library presently? Say at half past nine?"

"Certainly," she acquiesced, her tone a little breathless.

He bowed and stepped aside to let her pass on, when the sudden opening of a door upon the landing and the appearance of Bappis' new black nurse, a sister to Dinah, the chambermaid, made him pause.

"The little stubborn-head won't go to sleep till you come, Miss Joan!" complained the girl, not at once seeing Judge Randall, but, as she caught sight of him, shrinking back, abashed at her boldness. Then, being of the order of self-assertive negroes, she instantly resented her own abjectness, and grew pert.

"I tole him *Gawd* was lookin' down at him when he cut up such didos, and one of these here days He'd just lose His patience, and then Bappis would *see* what'd happen! And Bappis he was scairt, and he was just goin' to be good fur me when Dinah she had to talk in, and say there *ain't* no Gawd. Dinah she's a 'Theist. She's always sayin' there *ain't* no Gawd. I always tell her I don't keer."

Joan passed the girl, and walked on to Bappis' room.

Randall went downstairs to wait for her.

At half past nine promptly, as he sat reading in the large book-lined library, Miss Laird presented herself.

"This is very kind of you," he courteously, though perfunctorily, remarked as he rose at her entrance. "Would you prefer going outdoors? A walk on the beach in this moonlight might help us to thresh out the thing I must discuss with you."

"Very well."

He was glad the library opened on the side of the house, where the family was not sitting. No use in Sally's being unnecessarily alarmed at the sight of his leading Miss Laird out for a moonlight stroll. No doubt Miss Laird herself was astute enough not to wish to be seen, under such circumstances, by her apprehensive hostess.

"Now, then," he announced, as he gave her his arm in the pathway to the beach, "I have a bone to pick with you, Miss Laird."

She met this so like a child frightened at an impending rebuke that Randall thought what a domineering brute her husband, if she ever married, would probably become, with such pliable material at his hand to make him such. It seemed to him impossible that he should not easily succeed in persuading this most acquiescent of individuals to consent to what he was about to urge, though he remembered very well his sister's having told him that Joan had refused a self-supporting position offered her by Hubert McCord.

"You are cutting me out!" he gravely complained.

"Oh, no! Bappis loves you best—of course he does!"

"Not he! I've lost first place, and I demand redress."

"I'm sure you are mistaken, but if I have done such damage, I certainly hope," she murmured, "that I may be able to make reparation—if you will tell me how."

"There is only one way in which you can make it up to me."

"By going away?" she hastily asked, in a low voice, and her quickness to decide that *that* was what he wished struck her listener with the realization of how used she was to being asked, like Oliver Twist, to "move on"—a realization, however, calculated to arouse contempt rather than pity.

"Yes," he answered. "By going away. And taking Bappis with you."

"Taking Bappis!" she repeated, bewildered. "But how would that mend matters with *you*? Unless you think that the more Bappis sees of me the less he'll like me!"

He turned a sharp look upon her face just at his shoulder. Was the timid creature actually being playful with him? Her subdued, half-breathless tone, her pale, serious face, seemed a sufficient denial of his astonished suspicion.

"I've no such hope—or, rather, fear—as that. I yield you the first place—on condition that you come and live with us as his caretaker—at any salary you name. I should insist upon its being a large one, though I should value your service far beyond money, for it would enable me to open my house in Eastport once more, and give Bappis what he and I both so much need—a home."

He spoke rapidly, in an instinctive effort to conceal his extraordinary eagerness to try once more what had so often failed—keeping house with only hired people to manage things. This time, however, it seemed to hold out a hope of success, in the unprecedented fact that one employee at least would be filling her place, the most important place in his ménage, with love in her heart for the object of her care.

She did not answer at once. Looking down upon her, he could see the deep, quick heaving of her bosom under her thin white gown and the trembling of her bare arm on his.

"You should be as free in your position—more free—than you are now," he went on, unable, in his eagerness, to keep quiet and give her time. "My house should be to you like your own home. Your only duty would be to—well, to mother Bappis. And of course you would be sufficiently chaperoned by the presence of the housekeeper whom I should employ."

He waited; but still, to his puzzled surprise, she did not answer. He had really supposed she would eagerly jump at it.

"You would have to do only what you seem to find so much enjoyment in doing here," he urged, "with the difference that you would be drawing a salary for doing it. You have made me feel, in your unrequited services to my boy this summer, like a recipient of charity."

"And how do you find it feels?"—she suddenly lifted her head and spoke with a repressed intensity—"to be a recipient of charity?"

He felt like answering: "You ought to know!" for her delay in accepting this good thing he was offering her roused his impatience.

"I prefer paying my way," he replied, "and so I urge—no, I beg of you, Miss Laird—to accept my proposal."

She seemed to consider it, as again, with downcast eyes, she silently walked at his side.

He paused to kick from her path a heavy bramble, with that unobtrusive yet so thoughtful and unfailing care for women which made him, with all his cynicism, so attractive to them.

"I am very anxious," he spoke again irrepressibly, "to hear your view of what I suggest."

"Judge Randall," she replied at last, in a low voice, "you honor me very much with your willingness to trust me with Bappis—believe me, I appreciate it! But—it seems to me impossible."

"In Heaven's name, why, Miss

Laird? I should think you'd—" He checked, in time, his impetuous outburst.

"Jump at it?" She unexpectedly supplied the repressed clause.

"Well, why shouldn't you?—so fond of Bappis as you are. Come, let me hear your objections."

"You may marry again," she timidly suggested.

"I shall not. But even if I did, you'd only be where you are now, having had a temporary home with the child you love to be with."

"I should never get back to where I am now if for a time I occupied a place in your home as nursery governess."

He turned this over to see just what she meant. Was she telling him in effect that should she drop her chain of visits, she could never again pick it up and restore the lost links? That descending to the level of a hired governess would debar her from a certain prestige, small though it was, which was enjoyed by what you might call a professional guest?

"If you will stay with me until Bappis is old enough to go to boarding school, I shall pension you until you marry."

"You are very rash! You might have me on your hands all my life as a pensioner!"

"I'll take the chance of that. It would be worth a great deal to me—more than I have words to tell you, Miss Laird—to have my little boy cared for over the next five or six years as I know you would care for him."

"Judge Randall," she said, her voice trembling, "I wish I could do what you ask!"

"What, in God's name, is there to prevent? Let me know—and I swear I'll override any obstacles you may name!"

"Your sister wouldn't approve."

"That would not affect me."

"I shouldn't like to offend her—after all her kindness to me."

"You care more for that than for Bappis' need of you?"

She seemed to have no answer for this.

"I am not mistaken, am I, Miss Laird,

in assuming that you are not financially independent of the salary consideration?"

"No, you are not mistaken, Judge Randall."

"And your mother? Surely she would like it for you?"

She did not answer.

"Wouldn't it," he persisted, though hesitating to intrude too far upon her private affairs, "be a—a relief to your mother?"

"It ought to be," she faltered. "But—my mother is very proud, very ambitious."

"Too proud to have you honorably support yourself?" he inquired, gently incredulous.

She winced perceptibly, but he mercilessly added: "And you yourself are not proud?"

"Oh, *I!*" Her tone implied that such a negligible quantity was not to be taken into the account.

Again they walked in silence.

"Well?" he pressed her.

"I am deeply sorry to have to refuse you!" she faintly answered.

"Miss Laird, believe me, you are blind to your own best interests in refusing me."

She said nothing.

"You will not consider it?"

"I'm afraid I—I *can't*, Judge Randall!"

"You have not really given me any reason for your refusal, you know."

"I have none—that you would not consider paltry—inadequate."

"I am sure of that!" he retorted, his tone betraying an almost bitter disappointment.

She said nothing to this, and they strolled on, the sands of the beach crackling under their footsteps.

They appeared to have come to the end of the matter, leaving no more to be said. Randall felt it to be almost an absurdity that he was powerless to influence, to conquer, this young person whom he had thought so pliable, so weakly ineffectual, "a negligible quantity." Was she, perhaps, like most weak, sappy characters, stupidly obstinate? She certainly seemed to have no

common sense if she preferred this eternal sponging to a self-respecting life of usefulness.

"Then your answer is an unqualified refusal?" he coldly inquired.

"It must be."

"You are aware that your refusal must appear strange to me?"

"Yes?" she said, with the faintest possible note of irony—a note that seemed to ask by what right he demanded that she account for herself to him?

He did not know what to make of the girl.

"Shall we go in now?" she inquired, turning about to retrace their steps before he could reply.

They did not talk on their way back, Randall feeling almost childishly aggrieved from the slight that he felt her refusal put upon Bappis, and she not seeming to feel called upon to keep up any conversation. Once, as her scarf slipped from her shoulder, and he paused to replace it, his fingers touched her neck, and he felt that she was feverishly hot. Quiet as she seemed, this interview had evidently greatly stirred her.

As they neared the piazza steps, having taken the precaution to return on the library side, they saw, to Randall's annoyance, Mrs. McCord standing alone

at the railing, watching their slow and silent approach. Evidently, alert with apprehension as she was, the suspicious absence from the family circle of both Joan and himself had put her on the lookout. He hardened his heart against the pang of pity he instinctively experienced for Joan. Sally's displeasure was no slight thing to face. He felt a faintly amused curiosity to see what his sister would do about it. If she couldn't manage Joan any better than *he* could!

The girl's violent start as she caught sight of her hostess awaiting her, and the sudden pallor of her face as she went up the steps to meet her, caused Randall to wonder afresh why she should prefer an existence apparently so abominable, to accepting a home where she was needed and wanted, and could hold up her head without shame or truckling.

"Bappis is crying for you—as usual!" Mrs. McCord freezingly informed her, and, without replying, Joan sped indoors.

Randall, after lingering for an instant to give his sister the opportunity—which she proved too wise to take—to unburden her mind of what he knew must be weighing heavily upon it, also went indoors and upstairs to his bed-chamber, which adjoined Bappis' nursery.

TO BE CONTINUED.



Indian Summer

THE leafy drift across forgotten paths
That lure the yearning thought astray;
The mist and golden glory on the wood;
The strange, still sorrow of the day.

Unanswering blue, adream on distant fields;
A whisper ere the shadows fall;
The call of some wild thing in loneliness—
And oh, the heartache of it all!

LE ROY HENNESSEY.

SNAP JUDGMENT

By Edwin L. Sabin

YES, of course you are a good judge of men. In fact, did you ever chance upon anybody who was not—in his own opinion? Did you ever chance upon anybody who did not, at one time or another, squint his eyes, and purse his lips, and emit knowingly: "W-well, I'm a pretty good judge o' people; I usually size 'em up on the spot. And when I saw this fellow, said I to myself or my wife," et cetera, et cetera.

Did you? I didn't. Fact is, privately now, I've been somewhat of a judge of human types, myself—in those days when I didn't know less than later.

But it is rather humiliating to list a man as a close-fisted curmudgeon, and then to have him come around, when you are in need, and by a voluntary act of generosity put a plank under you, so to speak, until you can grasp the limb of the tree again.

It is rather humiliating to list a man as a selfish, mechanical, unsympathetic subhuman, and then, when you are steeped in a calamity which cries for compassion as the dry earth yearns for rain, to have him the one who speaks the understanding word, bestows the understanding touch.

It is rather humiliating to list a man as a narrow, ignorant fanatic, and then to be supplied with him by the information for which you have hunted high and low.

It is rather humiliating, it is decidedly humiliating, to class some man, or woman, either—and these observations apply to women—as "undesirable" neighbor or citizen; and then to discover that you have been losing by not knowing him, or her, better.

The ambient air is full of such fragments as:

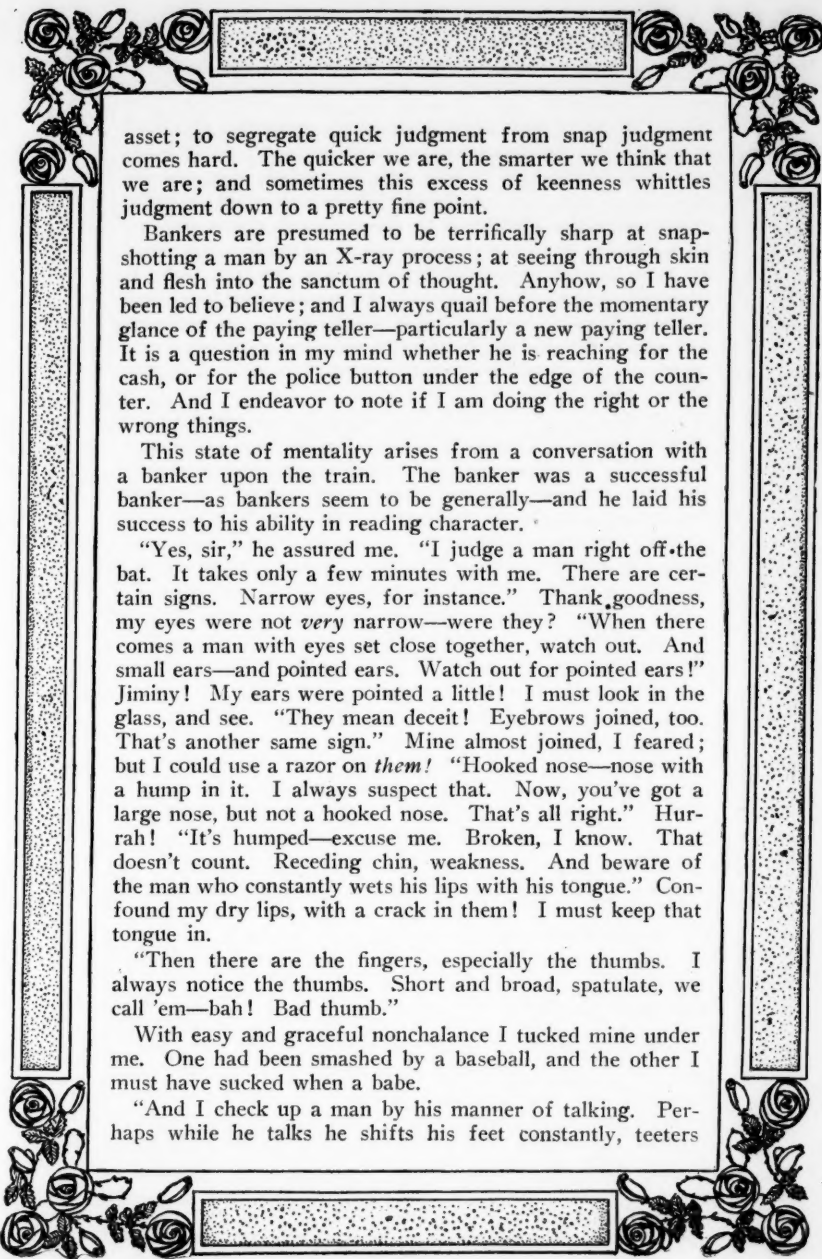
"Thank you; thank you!"

"I really didn't expect——"

"It never occurred to me that *you*——"

"I'm so sorry we didn't get to know each other sooner."

Quick and accurate judgment of humanity is rated as an



asset; to segregate quick judgment from snap judgment comes hard. The quicker we are, the smarter we think that we are; and sometimes this excess of keenness whittles judgment down to a pretty fine point.

Bankers are presumed to be terrifically sharp at snap-shotting a man by an X-ray process; at seeing through skin and flesh into the sanctum of thought. Anyhow, so I have been led to believe; and I always quail before the momentary glance of the paying teller—particularly a new paying teller. It is a question in my mind whether he is reaching for the cash, or for the police button under the edge of the counter. And I endeavor to note if I am doing the right or the wrong things.

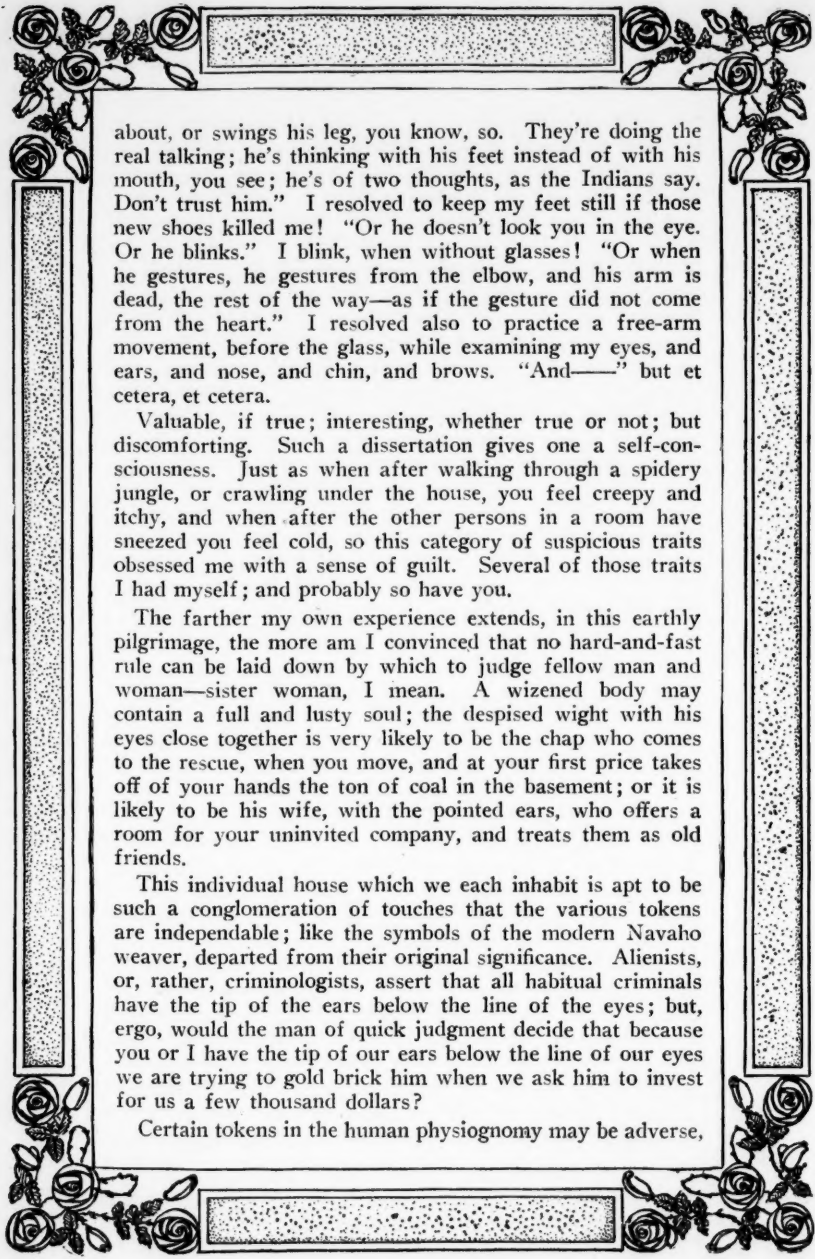
This state of mentality arises from a conversation with a banker upon the train. The banker was a successful banker—as bankers seem to be generally—and he laid his success to his ability in reading character.

"Yes, sir," he assured me. "I judge a man right off the bat. It takes only a few minutes with me. There are certain signs. Narrow eyes, for instance." Thank, goodness, my eyes were not *very* narrow—were they? "When there comes a man with eyes set close together, watch out. And small ears—and pointed ears. Watch out for pointed ears!" Jiminy! My ears were pointed a little! I must look in the glass, and see. "They mean deceit! Eyebrows joined, too. That's another same sign." Mine almost joined, I feared; but I could use a razor on *them*! "Hooked nose—nose with a hump in it. I always suspect that. Now, you've got a large nose, but not a hooked nose. That's all right." Hurrah! "It's humped—excuse me. Broken, I know. That doesn't count. Receding chin, weakness. And beware of the man who constantly wets his lips with his tongue." Confound my dry lips, with a crack in them! I must keep that tongue in.

"Then there are the fingers, especially the thumbs. I always notice the thumbs. Short and broad, spatulate, we call 'em—bah! Bad thumb."

With easy and graceful nonchalance I tucked mine under me. One had been smashed by a baseball, and the other I must have sucked when a babe.

"And I check up a man by his manner of talking. Perhaps while he talks he shifts his feet constantly, teeters



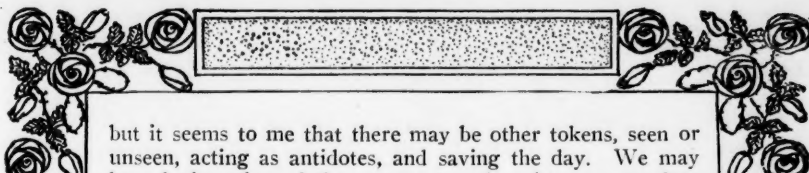
about, or swings his leg, you know, so. They're doing the real talking; he's thinking with his feet instead of with his mouth, you see; he's of two thoughts, as the Indians say. Don't trust him." I resolved to keep my feet still if those new shoes killed me! "Or he doesn't look you in the eye. Or he blinks." I blink, when without glasses! "Or when he gestures, he gestures from the elbow, and his arm is dead, the rest of the way—as if the gesture did not come from the heart." I resolved also to practice a free-arm movement, before the glass, while examining my eyes, and ears, and nose, and chin, and brows. "And——" but et cetera, et cetera.

Valuable, if true; interesting, whether true or not; but discomfoting. Such a dissertation gives one a self-consciousness. Just as when after walking through a spidery jungle, or crawling under the house, you feel creepy and itchy, and when after the other persons in a room have sneezed you feel cold, so this category of suspicious traits obsessed me with a sense of guilt. Several of those traits I had myself; and probably so have you.

The farther my own experience extends, in this earthly pilgrimage, the more am I convinced that no hard-and-fast rule can be laid down by which to judge fellow man and woman—sister woman, I mean. A wizened body may contain a full and lusty soul; the despised wight with his eyes close together is very likely to be the chap who comes to the rescue, when you move, and at your first price takes off of your hands the ton of coal in the basement; or it is likely to be his wife, with the pointed ears, who offers a room for your uninvited company, and treats them as old friends.

This individual house which we each inhabit is apt to be such a conglomeration of touches that the various tokens are independable; like the symbols of the modern Navaho weaver, departed from their original significance. Alienists, or, rather, criminologists, assert that all habitual criminals have the tip of the ears below the line of the eyes; but, ergo, would the man of quick judgment decide that because you or I have the tip of our ears below the line of our eyes we are trying to gold brick him when we ask him to invest for us a few thousand dollars?

Certain tokens in the human physiognomy may be adverse,



but it seems to me that there may be other tokens, seen or unseen, acting as antidotes, and saving the day. We may have had a stingy father or great-uncle, who gave us close eyes; but we may have had a generous mother or great-aunt, who gave us big ears.


In the bright morning of my youth a young chap would run around with us, but we despised him—we ourselves being lavish spenders of our ten-dollars-a-week wages, and he being no spender at all, and laboring under the alleged burden of a hooked nose, and close eyes, and a narrow chest, and a lineage which, we assumed, went back to Palestine.

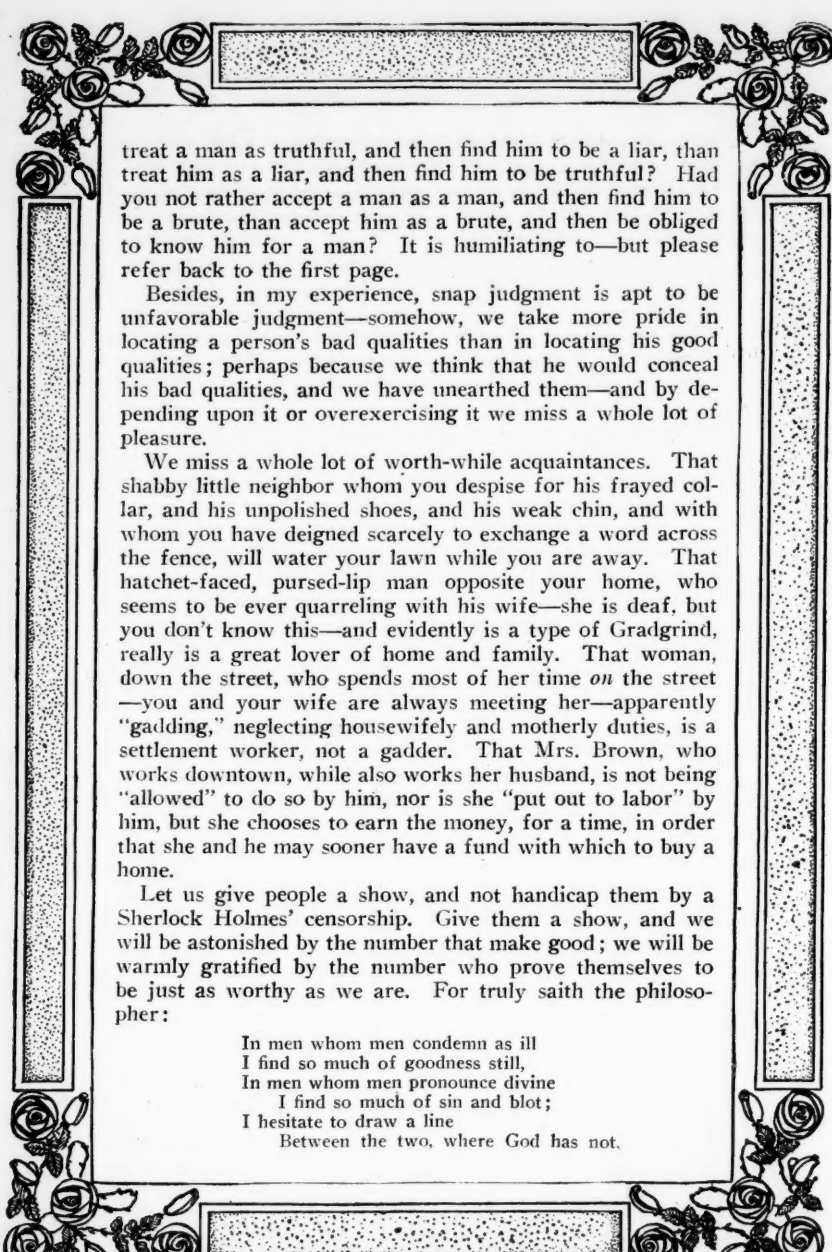
Thereby we assumed more. However, this being the régime of a democratic aristocracy when a loud necktie and a pompadour—'twas the first era of pompadours—bespoke the man, Jake would have been welcomed to our society if he only had spent. He was a pleasant lad, a mighty pleasant lad, willing and smart—but what a tightwad! I don't know as we called him tightwad then; possibly the term had not been invented. But the gap was appropriately filled.

So we ostracized Jake, since he would not buy ice cream and soda water and other luxuries; and we treated him with scorn for six months until we found that he was putting all his money into and upon and around a widowed mother and a crippled brother. Bah for us! We, the "spenders," generous for soda water and ice cream and for taking the girls to dances! It is not probable that we apologized, viva voce, to poor little Jake, noble little Jake; for some things you can't apologize, with words; but I want to apologize publicly, in writing, to him here.

That was a mere incident, such as occurs frequently. This keen and prompt judgment upon which we depend to read our human kin, and in which we take great pride, is based upon circumstantial evidence; and circumstantial evidence is the tricky kind. The ethics of the law is—or should be—that better ten criminals escape than one innocent person be condemned. Yet you and I, brother with the snap judgment, constantly are condemning the innocent. And we eventually must conclude that to find a person to be worse than we category him is more agreeable than to find him to be better than we category him.

Now, that reads oddly. But listen: Had you not rather





treat a man as truthful, and then find him to be a liar, than treat him as a liar, and then find him to be truthful? Had you not rather accept a man as a man, and then find him to be a brute, than accept him as a brute, and then be obliged to know him for a man? It is humiliating to—but please refer back to the first page.

Besides, in my experience, snap judgment is apt to be unfavorable judgment—somehow, we take more pride in locating a person's bad qualities than in locating his good qualities; perhaps because we think that he would conceal his bad qualities, and we have unearthed them—and by depending upon it or overexercising it we miss a whole lot of pleasure.

We miss a whole lot of worth-while acquaintances. That shabby little neighbor whom you despise for his frayed collar, and his unpolished shoes, and his weak chin, and with whom you have deigned scarcely to exchange a word across the fence, will water your lawn while you are away. That hatchet-faced, pursed-lip man opposite your home, who seems to be ever quarreling with his wife—she is deaf, but you don't know this—and evidently is a type of Gradgrind, really is a great lover of home and family. That woman, down the street, who spends most of her time *on* the street—you and your wife are always meeting her—apparently “gadding,” neglecting housewifely and motherly duties, is a settlement worker, not a gadder. That Mrs. Brown, who works downtown, while also works her husband, is not being “allowed” to do so by him, nor is she “put out to labor” by him, but she chooses to earn the money, for a time, in order that she and he may sooner have a fund with which to buy a home.

Let us give people a show, and not handicap them by a Sherlock Holmes' censorship. Give them a show, and we will be astonished by the number that make good; we will be warmly gratified by the number who prove themselves to be just as worthy as we are. For truly saith the philosopher:

In men whom men condemn as ill
I find so much of goodness still,
In men whom men pronounce divine
I find so much of sin and blot;
I hesitate to draw a line
Between the two, where God has not.

Deus ex Machina

By Margaret Busbee Shipp

Author of "The Bottom Rung," "Her Heritage," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY G. C. PUGSLEY

MRS. TRESVANT'S touring car had stopped at a point of vantage where its occupants might obtain a good view of the aviation meet.

The fair grounds were filled with a surging, expectant throng, for this was the first visit of the "birdmen" to the small Southern capital. The afternoon was clear and windless, good flying weather.

A boy in the crowd, selling ice-cream cones, jumped upon the steps of the machine, and offered his wares to Miss Seymour.

"Get off!" commanded Ogden sharply. "You'll spill that dirty stuff on her dress."

The youngster obeyed, but called back defiantly:

"I just wanted to get a good look at the lady. She's so sparkly. I didn't hurt you, old Sourball!"

"Sparkly," echoed Dallam from the front seat of the machine. "He has hit it exactly. The flash of sunshine on running water! The ripple of color on a bird's breast! The quiver of young leaves in the breeze! Here, youngster!" He tossed the boy a coin. "Good word, wasn't it?"

He appealed genially to Ogden, quite unaware that the boy's impudent epithet had marked that urchin as a brand fitted for the burning. Ogden took himself seriously, and Dallam took life joyously; and there is no common focus to those angles of vision.

Priscilla Seymour delicately offered herself to soothe the ruffled sensibilities of her companion. Her color heightened as she turned to Ogden.

"It's nearly an hour before the meet

begins. I've never seen a county fair. Will you show me the big pumpkins and the prize cotton stalks?"

Ogden bent toward her in his exquisitely deferential manner.

"You would be elbowed and jostled by the crowd, and the experience would be a disagreeable one. Our best plan is to wait here; it is better to kill time than to exhaust one's self."

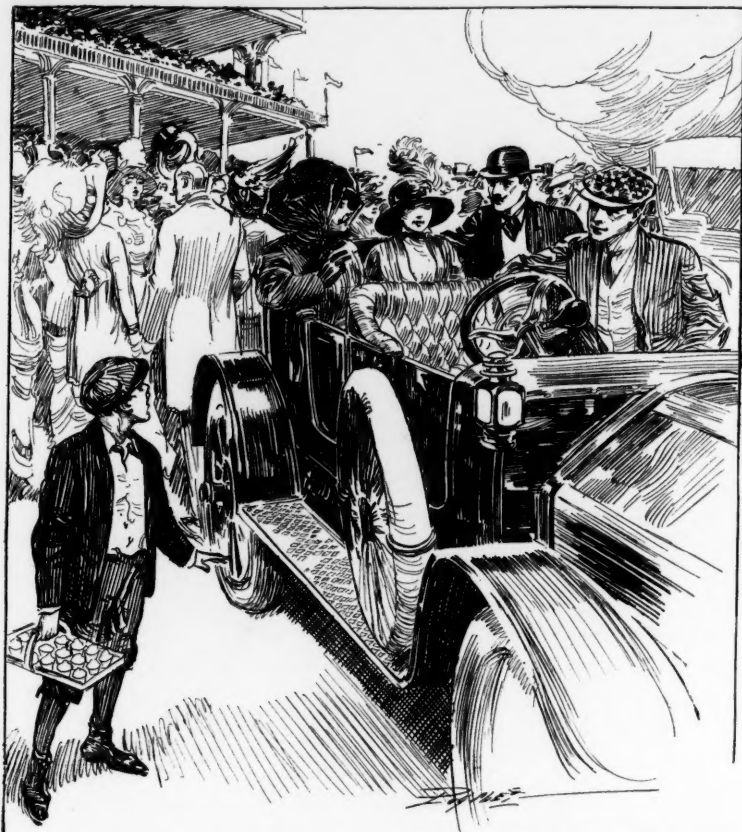
Dallam had swung himself out of the machine.

"I'm going to look at the boys' corn exhibit. It's wonderful what those little chaps have done. Would you like to come, Miss Seymour? We can call on prize Plymouth Rocks, or blue-ribbon Berkshires, if you share little Marjorie Fleming's wish to see 'swine which is delightful.'"

"Shall I go?" Priscilla asked their hostess. "Won't you come, too, Mrs. Tresvant?"

"No, I shall have a chat with Mr. Ogden while we are waiting for the other machine to come up," returned Mrs. Tresvant gayly, though she quailed at the prospect. She knew the hour would stretch out interminably in the considered courtesy which Ogden would vouchsafe.

He was quite reasonably offended. When you have made up your mind to make a certain young woman your wife, and her evident pleasure in your society and appreciation of your attentions have given you every reason to believe she reciprocates your wish, and when you have decided upon the auspicious hour in which to declare your intentions, it is maddening that a hostess—hitherto a model of discretion and



"I just wanted to get a good look at the lady. She's so sparkly. I didn't hurt you, old Sourball!"

laissez-faire—should suddenly develop energetic plans for the entertainment of her guests, and whisk them twenty miles away to an aviation meet!

Ogden had advised against the plan from the beginning; he had frankly told Mrs. Tresvant that he and Miss Seymour had planned a morning on horseback, and Priscilla had shyly and sweetly seconded him. But, in spite of this, the obtuse Mrs. Tresvant had hurried them off on this absurd trip, over roads rough from recent rains.

The second machine, which arrived presently, contained the Banister twins,

Frank Nash, and Bob Tresvant. They had been Mrs. Tresvant's guests for the fortnight since the hunting season had opened. The Tresvants owned the largest hunting preserve in that section of the State, and their hospitable home was thrown open to their friends as soon as the open season for partridges began.

Ogden, a classmate of Bob Tresvant's, had been for several years a guest on these occasions. As he was an excellent shot, a graceful dancer, and an exceptionally handsome man, his presence had always been a distinct ad-

dition, while his reputation for being impervious to feminine charm had added a certain distinction in the eyes of the capricious sex.

Mrs. Tresvant felt horribly vexed with herself at the dénouement. She had invited Dallam to come over from the university, where he was professor of geology, for the week-ends, as he could not leave his work for the fortnight. Mainly on his account she had included Priscilla among her guests; Priscilla was so pretty, so responsive, so thrilling with the joy of life that Mrs. Tresvant meant to enjoy the sight of their unfolding romance. Alas for the best-laid plans! The first evening that Ogden met the girl he "distinguished her with his intentions." Mrs. Tresvant phrased it to herself with inward grimace, subtly realizing that was just the way Ogden would think of it himself.

Two weeks under the same roof, in which every day brought opportunities of long rides through November woods, was worth half a year of ordinary intercourse. Ogden fell in love, decorously, seriously, advisedly. Priscilla's birth, breeding, and beauty, her glowing health, her somewhat awed attitude of mind toward himself, made her the ideal woman for the position of his wife.

With increasing alarm Mrs. Tresvant had watched his absorbed attentions to the girl, and Priscilla's deepening interest in him. Was she wise to wish to interfere with Priscilla's marriage to a man so eligible in every way, so moderate, in spite of his great wealth? But Sarah Tresvant had known in her youth the enthusiastic girl who married Ogden's father, and had seen her ten years later, recut to his pattern, cold, and listless of manner, conventional of speech and thought, merely the mirror of her husband's standard of a wife. He was entirely satisfied, and absolutely unaware that he had murdered her, that he had calmly and inexorably strangled the vivid, spontaneous creature whom he had married.

This memory had caused poor Mrs. Tresvant to flee in terror from her

own handiwork, using the aviation meet as an excuse for picking up her guests bodily and taking them away. At least she could defer the engagement until after Dallam's departure the following day. Mrs. Tresvant could understand that a conquest like Ogden's capitulation would have more of the element of fascination for a young girl than the devotion of years like Dallam's, which she had learned to accept as naturally as the sunshine.

The automobile races were over and the hour quite past when Priscilla and Dallam returned to the machine. The girl's hands were full of yardsticks, come-back balls, paper caps, chanticleers, and sundry other advertising devices which had been thrust upon them. The lovely look of youth and laughter in her eyes quite atoned for the fact that her curly hair was somewhat disheveled, and her hat awry. Priscilla put up her hands and hurriedly straightened her hat. Something in Ogden's glance had communicated the information that it was not on straight.

"Ed, why didn't you tell me that my feathers were hanging over one ear?" she reproached Dallam.

"I thought that must be the way to wear them," he returned innocently, "like the horses at a royal funeral, and immensely becoming it was."

"Ed is perfectly hopeless," Priscilla complained to Mrs. Tresvant. "Last year's shirt waist and one's latest evening gown bask alike in the full rays of his approval."

"I prefer the shirt waist," declared Dallam. "Then I get an occasional chance to talk to you, but when you put on a 'creation,' the men are three rows deep around you."

Ogden gave a slight, deprecatory cough. The open way in which Dallam permitted the world to know he was in love with Priscilla struck the older man as being the quintessence of bad taste. Priscilla, seated next to Ogden in the tonneau, felt the charm of his lowered voice, his deferential manner, the dignity with which he carried off his good looks. The Banister twins were looking at her in the surprise



The automobile races were over and the hour quite past when Priscilla and Dallam returned to the machine.

which is the truest tribute. They were evidently wondering how she had captured this hitherto impregnable Sir Charles Grandison of the virtues. The knowledge thrilled her natural girlish vanity.

A stir like a great wave sweeping over the throng announced that the aviator had taken his place in the biplane.

The two biplanes were in the center of the big, bare oval which was surrounded by the race track. The track in its turn was bounded by a low, white fence, beyond which no one was allowed to go.

Priscilla had expected there would be at least a dozen false starts; she was unprepared for the seeming simplicity of flying.

The propeller whizzed, the machine ran along the ground for several hundred feet, then rose into the air as easily as a bird. Lightly the biplane rose in giant circles of increasing speed, soared higher and higher in glorious flight, now seeming black against the shining background of the sun, now against a background of blue sky.

A pandemonium of cheers broke from ten thousand throats. The university phalanx, who had come for the occasion, began to chant in stentorian accord:

"He's up, he's up, he's up in the air! What's the matter with Skylark? He's—all—right!"

Over the cotton fields adjoining the fair grounds the operator skimmed in easy flight, while the onlookers held their breath as he began to descend. Now the biplane was circling low over the open space of the race-track oval; now it dropped to earth again, glided along the ground, and stopped.

Tears lay unheeded on the girl's cheeks.

"Oh, how splendid it is! To think we should ever set a limit to the wonder and the glory and the possibility of life, when God has not set a limit even to the conquest of the air!"

Her pulses were quick-throbbing with the marvel of it, of that "mystery just on the outside of man's dreams," which

flying might be the first step toward solving.

Her eyes caught Dallam's; the frank, eager eyes which illumined his plain face smiled into hers with a perfect comprehension of her mood. Then, with an impulse she could not understand, she wiped away the tears before she turned to Ogden. She did not want him to think her childish, sentimental. But he had not seen that springing of quick tears—his eyes were on his stop watch, timing the flight. An impulse of rebellion seized Priscilla.

"I could not have timed that flight any more than I could have counted the number of seconds it takes the sun to set!" she exclaimed.

"No?" Ogden's voice held a note of amusement, and she felt conscious that her outburst had seemed exuberant.

She did not voice her pleasure in the second and the third flights, but when an unexpected puff of wind caused one of the biplanes to strike the ground too violently, the crippling of the brave machine hurt her as if it had been a sentient thing.

The crowd began to thin out, and Bob Tresvant was so enthusiastic that he insisted upon waiting to see if the wind would die down; and his patience was rewarded by witnessing the longest and prettiest flight of the afternoon.

"We really must get away as quickly as we can," said Mrs. Tresvant. "Drive the machines around the race course, and out of the side entrance. Oh, what a nuisance! We shall get his dust."

The exclamation of annoyance was caused by the fact that a runabout had slipped in front of their car and had gained the race track. The driver, wishing to give an exhibition of the machine for which he was agent, "opened up" at full speed. Because of the cloud of dust between, Priscilla could not see exactly what happened. In fact, she heard the screams of the bystanders before she realized that the man in front had lost control of his machine. At the curve at the west end of the track it swerved from its course. Crashing through the flimsy fence and plowing down the five-foot incline, it dashed into the

crowd. They scattered in mad terror, but, fortunately, the people were not massed at the spot where the wild machine ran its brief course of havoc and disaster.

The Tresvants' car was quickly on the scene. A girl had fainted; half a dozen people had been knocked down; one woman lay crumpled up with a broken leg; a colored woman, badly hurt, was moaning in pain, and a boy's ice-cream cones had fallen from his broken arm.

Then occurred that everyday phenomenon which is taken as a matter of course. A man of resolute and capable bearing appeared. "The doctor! The doctor!" And the whole chaotic sense of responsibility had shifted as if by magic to the shoulders of one man.

Doctor Ashley gave directions to telephone for the ambulance as he knelt by a suffering woman and touched her with skillful hands.

"Oh, Mrs. Tresvant, think how jolly and saucy that little fellow looked when he tried to sell us ice cream early this afternoon," said Priscilla regretfully.

As if the words suggested an idea, the boy opened his eyes, waved his left arm over the cones which the wheel of the machine had mashed out of all shape, and sang out weakly:

"Ice-cream cones! Five cents only, fi-ve cents!"

With a sob Priscilla opened her purse and dropped a five-dollar bill on the debris. Dallam followed suit, then Bob Tresvant, and the crowd, surging forward, dropped coins and bills on the pile until they threatened to overrun the small chap himself.

"Stand back," ordered the doctor, as the boy's turn for examination came.

The youngster winked at the bystanders in good-fellowship.

"Come on, people! Don't notice doc. This is *my* funeral."

But the words were gasped out with difficulty, and he lay so white and still that Priscilla thought he had fainted.

"A greenstick fracture," pronounced Doctor Ashley encouragingly. "We'll get you fixed in short order."

The onlookers made way for the am-

bulance. A surgeon and an orderly jumped out, and lifted in the two moaning women. The boy made unexpected resistance.

"I'll be darned if I go to your ole sick jail," he panted. "Once git a boy in there and it's no tellin' what you'll do. Didn't Jinks go there jes' to git a splinter out'n his big toe? If Jinks had axed me, I'd have cut it out with my knife, and that 'd been the end of it. But they grabbed Jinks and doped him and sez it was blood'pisenin' mostly, and cut off his toe and kept it themselves! You don't git my arm in no bottle."

Too wise to argue with ignorance, Doctor Ashley said in his kind way:

"I can put your arm in a splint just as well here as at the hospital, if you're game to stand it."

"Now you're talkin', doc. I'm game."

Doctor Ashley reached for the emergency case, and the ambulance drove away. As he bandaged the arm he asked:

"Where do you live, youngster?"

"Kelly's Crossroads."

"Have you any way to get back? You can't walk four miles."

"I've got to." The gamin notes gave place to something older, reasoning. "Pa's dead, and ma she's the skeery kind. She'd be skeered plumb to death if I didn't turn up at supper time."

"That's Dan Perry," explained a farmer standing by. "He's sassy, but he sholy does look out for Mrs. Perry."

"Can't we take him home, Mrs. Tresvant?" urged Priscilla.

Mrs. Tresvant demurred a moment.

"It's in the opposite direction, dear. I told my husband we should be home for dinner by eight at latest. Let me see; we could use the middle seat in the big car, and put three to a seat, and two of you could take that poor child back to his mother in the small machine. Bob is too reckless a driver for an injured boy; I think you had better trust to Mr. Ogden or Mr. Dallam."

Mrs. Tresvant turned to see which man would volunteer. Dallam had gone to speak to Bob, and was out of ear-shot. A queer flutter beat in Priscilla's breast. Her mind seemed to be echo-



With a sob Priscilla opened her purse and dropped a five-dollar bill on the débris.

ing "Kelly's Crossroads!" as if it epitomized the crossways of her own life.

Ogden cleared his throat. An hour with the Lady Paramount in the glowing November woods was what he wanted, what he determined to have the next morning, in spite of airships, and broken bones, and obtuse hostesses. But this sentimental expedition in the waning afternoon to convey a dirty and impudent boy to his probably dirty and impudent mother, entailing a ride over rough roads, and dinner at any hour, was hardly to his taste.

"My dear Mrs. Tresvant, by all means dissuade Miss Seymour from exposing herself to possible contagion and

certain discomfort. There's a garage in the town, and I shall be glad to order a machine and have her pert protégé deposited upon his own doorstep."

Dallam came up just in time to hear the last sentence.

"What's that? Bob says he can easily put you all in the big car and let me take the little chap home. I should like it immensely, and he ought to be carried to his mother without any more delay. He is as white as paper."

"I'm mighty glad you two are goin' to take me, Ugly Mug, and not ole Sourball," said Dan faintly. "I like you and the Sparkly Lady fine."

"You!" exclaimed Dallam in sur-

prise, turning to Priscilla. "You mustn't come. You'll be too tired."

But Priscilla stepped into the car.

"Put your head against my shoulder, Dan. Lean against me, and make yourself comfortable, dear."

The car sped smoothly away, its three occupants silent.

Priscilla's thoughts were held by the strange thrill of her pulses when Dallam spoke. As if a veil had been lifted, she had seen that Ogden could not sacrifice his creature comforts, even to be with her, while Dallam was swift to serve a child, without knowing he was to have the reward of her companionship. For the first time in her carelessly joyous life Priscilla dissected her own emotions. She thought of how Ogden had engrossed her thoughts for the fortnight past; how proud she had been of the fact that he had singled her out for his admiration; how she had delighted to see his look of disapproval melt before some pretty surrender of her own opinion. Quietly she examined this feeling, and knew it as vanity.

She thought of Dallam's instant responsiveness, his instant understanding of her moods. He sympathized whether or not he happened to agree; he was the more loyal to his own conviction because he respected the individuality of others. Why, when she came to Ed with any plan or dream, it was like giving her soul a sun bath! A glow pervaded her as if with actual warmth. Was this love then, this sense of happiness, of freedom, of limitless comprehension and sympathy?

When they reached Dan's home, a slight little woman in black was waiting at the gate.

"Ma!" cried the boy. "Here I am ridin' on the main road with the high-rollers and you a-lookin' for me down the cowpath! Here's somethin' to make you open your eyes. Look at our money, ma!"

Mrs. Perry noticed neither automobile nor money.

"What's the matter, honey? Oh, Danny, what has hurt you, what has hurt my precious baby?"

Priscilla's eyes were brimming, when,

after reassuring the frightened mother, she took her seat in the car again, this time by Dallam.

"Ed," she murmured, "I feel as if I'd taken a postgraduate course in life. I've learned so many things to-day."

"Such as——"

"That nothing really mattered to Mrs. Perry and Dan but each other; that Mr. Ogden looks at his watch while you and I look at the airship against the sky; that he sits in the machine in dignified disdain while we have such jolly, human times; that he can give money to other people, but never *himself*, as you can; as I can, perhaps, if you'll show me the way."

The machine wobbled perilously near the ditch and stopped. For its chauffeur had taken its passenger into two tender, eager arms.

It was after ten when they reached Mrs. Tresvant's. Bob, who had gone outside to meet them, preceded the recreants into the living room.

"And you trusted Priscilla with Ed instead of me because of my recklessness! The car has been in every mud-hole from here to Kelly's Crossroads, and they lost their way on the straight main road!"

Ogden glanced up with chilling disapproval. But Priscilla seemed absolutely unaware of his coldness. Star-eyed, radiant, exquisite, she looked as if she had seen the opening portals of paradise, and any woman living might have been satisfied with the expression of happiness upon Dallam's face.

"You poor children!" said Mrs. Tresvant. "Come right into the dining room."

"What for?" asked Priscilla, bewildered.

"You dear innocent, you haven't had any dinner."

"Why, that's true," exclaimed the girl, as if making an interesting discovery. "We had forgotten all about it, hadn't we, Ed?"

Ogden's face blanched, but Mrs. Tresvant's kindly heart quickened as she led the way into the dining room.

"Another triumph of aviation!" she thought in deep satisfaction.

OLD TIMBERS

MARION SHORT

Author of "The Swan," "The Famous Cochran Children," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBT. A. GRAEF

A NEW unpaved street bisected the large, bare hillside. Facing it was a solitary white frame cottage which glistened bright with paint and smelled of varnish. Sparse young vines were beginning to struggle up the trelliswork of the piazza. A freshly laid cement walk ran from street to door. On either side the walk, small shrubs and trees were struggling for a foothold in the crude soil. The dog kennel in the side yard was new. Half-way out of the kennel, dozing in the sun, lay a brindle bulldog splotched with white. He was new-looking also. There was a little new stable back of the house.

It seemed somehow incongruous when an old man came hobbling out of the stable, and simultaneously a thin, gray-haired woman emerged jerkily onto the piazza. The new house, with its surroundings, looked more as if intended for the habitation of a newly married couple, as, indeed, it was. Young Burnett Calvert and his wife were even now hourly expected.

In his hand the old man carried a pie pan containing a supply of dog biscuit and bones. He stopped in front of the kennel, and before rousing the puppy from his dreams gazed eagerly down the hill toward the little railway station, which, in the middle of the parked space beyond, stood out like a

solitary brown comma on a page of green.

"So many blamed trains a-stoppin' here every other minit," he complained, "this bein' a commutin' p'int, how's a body to guess which one they might be on?"

The old lady carefully smoothed the lace collar of her flowered lavender gown, and ran her aristocratic fingers over the fine wrinkles of her face to remove any lingering traces of talcum. Turning primly, she eyed with marked disapproval the rusty suit of blue overalls the old man was wearing.

"It seems to me, Mr. Garde," she said, with clear, didactic distinctness, "that if there is any time when respect should be shown a young man, it is the hour he arrives with his bride to take possession of his home."

The old man gave a resentful snort, and spilled the contents of the pie pan on the back of the puppy.

"There you go naggin' ag'in, Mis' Jenkins—a naggin' an' insinooatin'! Why ain't I showin' respect, I'd like to know? What do you mean by that air remark, anyhow?"

Mrs. Jenkins began polishing an amethyst earring with a tiny silk handkerchief.

"It is far from respectful to go around looking like a hired man when the wedding garment is required."



"It seems to me, Mr. Garde, that if there is any time when respect should be shown a young man, it is the hour he arrives with his bride to take possession of his home."

She transferred her attentions to the other earring.

"Of course," she continued, more graciously, "if you make haste, there is yet time for you to change to proper clothing before they catch sight of you."

With a swagger, James Garde thrust his hands into the pockets of his overalls, and spat defiantly to one side.

"You can't boss me around, Mis' Jenkins, even if you was a school-teacher once—a thousand year ago—an' ain't be'n able to fergit it since, an' even if you do talk like you was readin' out of a book, stid of plain English. I ain't

goin' to change my clothes for Burn Calvert, 'cause he's got too much sense to expect it. An' I ain't changin' 'em to please you jest on general principles. I believe in womenfolks a-bein' subjugated, an' in menfolks a-maintainin' of their identity."

"You can do as you please, Mr. Garde." Mrs. Jenkins grew rigid alike of voice and figure. "But I still insist that as a member of Mr. Burnett Calvert's family you—"

"Member of his family!" The interruption reeked with scorn. "What's the use of sailin' under false colors, Mis' Jenkins? We ain't members of his family—you an' me—near or distant—never will be. Burn jest took us in because he thought I was an underpaid old caretaker, an' you a pitiful old woman grubbin' away at sewin' for a livin'. That

talk of his about wantin' us to be his dear adopted parents was jest to make us feel comfortable about livin' off of him. But you ain't his mother, an' I ain't his father, an' sayin' so can't make it so. An' I ain't goin' struttin' round pretendin' I'm what I ain't, even if that is your idee of what's what."

He twisted a bone from the puppy's mouth, flung it over the fence, and wiped off the pie pan with his sleeve.

Mrs. Jenkins approached the piazza railing. She held her lavender skirts clear of contact with the paint, and leaned aggressively toward her antagonist in the blue overalls.

"Perhaps Burnett chose you as his adopted male parent out of pity, as you suspect," she said, her voice high and tremulous. "But he knows that I consented to occupy the position of mother in his household only as a great personal favor to him. When he insisted that his home would be incomplete without me—a mother being something that his life had always missed—I considered that it was my Christian duty to give up my occupation and come here. Poor Burnett's entire childhood was spent in an orphan asylum—"

The stubby individual in the yard below interrupted her again, raising his knotty hands, and flopping them toward her in a gesture of protest.

"As if I didn't know that hull orphan-asylum story back'ards! Didn't he spin it all out to me when he was argifyin' with me 'bout givin' up my job? But the payin' part of it was what caught me, not the parent part. He made it wuth my while financially to look after his stable an' sich—as I specified he'd got to let me do if I come—that's why I consented to pull up stakes where I was. But I ain't goin' to set on a piano stool in his parlor, wearin' patent-toed shoes an' pretendin' I'm what I ain't—no matter who thinks it's in the bargain."

He bent down to straighten a stake at the side of a drooping mulberry tree. "Can't see why they don't hurry up an' come if they're a-comin'."

Mrs. Jenkins held some crochetwork close to her nose, and put in a few nervous stitches.

"I don't see why any one with the overalls habit should feel obliged to agitate himself over the comings and goings of his superiors," she remarked sarcastically.

The old man removed the cap from his bald head, and set it on again, wrong side to, far back over the grizzly curls at the base of his neck.

"Who said they was superior?" he demanded. "Not me! An' who said I was agitatin' of myself, Mis' Jenkins? But I reckon I've got a right to mention Burn Calvert out loud, hain't I? Or do you an' that old poll parrot of yours

have all the talkin' privileges there be on the premises?"

Mrs. Jenkins, deigning no reply, carefully placed her fancywork in a silken bag hanging at her elbow.

"It's a pleasant day, and the sunshine on the porch ought to do her good," she remarked remotely, squinting up at the sky with her pale violet eyes.

"Do who good? The bride?" The old man bristled belligerently. "Do you reckon she's a-goin' to set herself down on the outside of the house when she gits here, 'fore she's give herself a peek at the inside of it?"

Mrs. Jenkins continued to address her remarks entirely to the heavens:

"Yes, it will certainly do the dear bird good."

Chin in air, she turned, pushed open the screen door, which squeaked newly on its hinges, and stepped into the hall.

Noticing that the puppy had begun to chew at the hem of his overalls, the old man relieved his irritated nerves by giving him a slight kick.

"Confound her old bird!" he muttered in his scraggly beard.

The puppy, pleased at being noticed, but resentful of the kick, set up a series of yelps, indeterminate in quality, but highly discordant.

When Mrs. Jenkins reappeared, she carried in her arms a large brass cage containing a bright-hued parrot. The puppy's yelping was immediately transformed into threatening throaty growls. He stood on his hind legs, and pawed in the direction of his gayly uniformed enemy, stretching a detaining chain to its full length, and thrusting his head out over his collar until he almost choked himself.

"That mongrel of yours," screamed Mrs. Jenkins, trying to make herself understood above the united clamor of parrot and dog, "almost frightens my poor Sapphira into fits. And he's ruining her temper!"

She hung the cage high on a new brass hook in the corner pillar of the piazza, far above the reach of leaping canines even when unchained.

"Good-by!" yelled Sapphira, her

beady eyes fixed on the dog. "Good-by!"

A slow, malicious grin crossed the old man's face.

"You'd better be sayin' 'good-by,' you old screechin' circus-gal freak! Burn ain't never goin' to put up with the likes of you around here."

The elaborately puffed head of the parrot's owner quivered with indignation.

"If Burnett objects to anything on the place, it will not be Sapphira, but that bow-legged, immoral-looking cur that belongs to you."

"Them bow legs proves he's a full-blooded bull pup," came the proud rejoinder. "I ain't skeered about Burn. Any man that is a man likes a full-blooded bull pup, same as he hates parrots. By jinks, but I'll be glad to see Burn! It's only be'n three weeks since you an' I opened up the house here, but it seems three year to me! If he wasn't comin' home to-day to change the currents, I think I'd bust!"

Mrs. Jenkins arose from the porch chair in which she had just seated herself.

"Since you persist not only in wearing those hired-man clothes, but in making objectionable remarks as well, I really cannot be expected to remain out here in your company to receive Burnett and his wife."

"Suits me to a T," yelled James Garde wrathfully, as the screen door closed behind her lavender-flowered figure. Shrilly he began to whistle "Greenland's Icy Mountains," and started back around the house toward the stable.

The parrot preened her feathers in the sun, and the bulldog slept.

As he helped her off the train, Burnett Calvert looked down proudly at his bride. She wore an ashes-of-roses gown, and her graceful hat was laden with big ashy plumes waving softly in the breeze.

"And this is Lyndhurst!" she exclaimed, her eloquent gray eyes looking up at him happily. "And Lyndhurst spells our future home!"

"Our home right now!" Calvert informed her, with glad emphasis. "I told you I had one or two surprises for you, dear, and this is the big one: It isn't just a rented house we're going to live in, Virginia, but a home of our very own, bought and paid for!"

Virginia's sensitive face paled a little at the news. She adored Calvert, but during these brief weeks of their honeymoon she had made two or three rather disconcerting discoveries as to his personal traits. For one thing, he had a habit of acting entirely without her knowledge or consent in matters intimately concerning them both; and when it came to making a decision, she perceived in him a sort of terrifying setness that neither recognized nor considered opposition in the minds of others. But Virginia, though she, too, had a will of her own, also possessed to a marked degree the feminine quality of adaptability; and this she had willingly exercised from the hour she became Calvert's wife. Consequently there had been no friction whatever between them, and Calvert, at least, was ideally happy.

"So you bought a home for me," she exclaimed unsteadily, "without saying a word to me about it beforehand!"

Though she tried hard to speak with the enthusiasm she knew was expected of her, there was a tinge of acute disappointment in her voice. Calvert detected only the enthusiasm. He was not used to women's subtleties. And, of course, he could not know that Virginia had been secretly planning every detail of the home she had hoped he would some day build for her. Walking beside her, he could see only the top of her pretty hat, and not the countenance beneath. When finally he stooped to take an affectionate peep at her—he did this every once in a while, to make sure that anything so new and so dear could be really true—she was smiling as usual.

"It's on the exact spot where I had planned to build a house," Calvert informed her, pleased at her pleasure, "if I ever found the dearest little woman in the world to marry. But I was so

long in finding you that some other fellow grabbed my favorite patch of hillside as a real-estate investment, and started building on it himself. So I had to buy a shanty of him—the first one he's put up so far." He pointed to the new white house on the hill. "There it is in plain sight. Handy to the station. Gets me to my office in New York in an hour. When those trees in the yard grow up—those little runty things are trees—it ought to look sort of homelike—eh?"

"I should say so!" cried Virginia.

The shape of the dwelling and the fine big piazza impressed her favorably, and she was glad to be able to express genuine delight.

"When I found out that you loved me and would accept me, Virginia," confided

Calvert, as they walked along together through the sweet June air, "it seemed to make me greedy, somehow, for all the other blessings my years had missed. You know, I never in all my life had a real home—not even as a child—but this is a real one—at last!"

He peeped at her under her hat brim again, his face beaming with goodness.

"And I've still another surprise for you besides the home," he said. He held open the trim wrought-iron gate, and stood aside for her to pass.

"Why, Burney! I didn't know you were fond of animals," she murmured. "These are yours, I suppose—the dog—the parrot?"



"Don't you do it!" interrupted James Garde. "She wants to shet me out of the proceedin's, an' start findin' fault with me behind my back!"

"They belong here, all right," he assured her; "but they're not exactly mine." He smiled radiantly. "They're a part of the other surprise I spoke of."

Involuntarily Virginia shivered.

"Another surprise, dear? What is the other surprise?" she asked, stopping short, halfway up the cement walk.

"Having been raised in an orphan asylum," explained Calvert, sure of her interest and approval, "I always envied boys who had parents to love them—a dear old father—a sweet, gracious mother! Well, when I got to be junior partner in our commission house, and was financially able, I figured out that the next best thing to having parents

of my own would be to adopt some—a couple I've had my eye on for a long, long time, who lived in my neighborhood in Fordham. And that's just what I've done, Virginia, and brought them here—right here—to stay with us always, and complete our home!" He looked toward the closed front door. A shade of disappointment crossed his face. "I thought they'd surely be on the lookout to welcome us. But, after all—they're old folks. Maybe father forgot. Maybe Mother Antoinette is taking a nap."

Something in Virginia's utter silence, and in the tremble of her lip, made him suddenly apprehensive.

"You—you are pleased that I have adopted them, aren't you, Virginia?"

After a moment's silence, she looked him in the eyes bravely, sweetly.

"It was an odd thing to do, Burney—like no one in the world but you. Lots of people take children into their homes, but I never before heard of any one's caring to adopt a couple of stray old folks. It's altogether kind and dear and big-natured on your part—I understand just how you reasoned it out—and, of course, dear, I'll make the best of it."

A little cloud drifted dimly across the young husband's sky. Women are strange creatures! The very thing he had thought would please her most—she having long been an orphan, too—she was prepared to "make the best of."

A neat little maidservant answered Calvert's vigorous pull at the bell, but no one else was in sight.

"Mother! Father!" he called, brushing on past her.

The parlor door opened cautiously, and, after a preliminary peep to make sure that the coast was clear, Mrs. Jenkins stepped into the hall. No sooner had she done so than from the sitting room, opposite, Mr. Garde bounced out.

Calvert took Virginia by the hand.

"This is my wife!" he announced, with proud expectancy, looking from one to the other.

Mrs. Jenkins, glaring a dignified reproach at the warped little old man

across the hall, backed off like a stately steamboat from an undesirable wharf.

"If Mr. and Mrs. Calvert will kindly follow me into the parlor," she began, with extreme formality, "I will try to show——"

"Don't you do it!" interrupted James Garde, shaking a clenched fist above his shining pate, his eyes on the retreating form of Mrs. Jenkins. "She wants to shet me out of the proceedin's, an' start findin' fault with me behind my back!"

Instantly Mrs. Jenkins reached out a thin, determined hand, and, gripping the arm of the astonished Virginia, drew her inside the parlor door, and closed it.

The old man, as Calvert turned to him with a look of bewildered inquiry, beckoned him mysteriously to follow him into the sitting room, and when once inside closed the door with a bang calculated to go Mrs. Jenkins' late maneuver one better.

And in the above manner, Burnett Calvert and his wife received the parental blessing as they entered the precincts of home.

A month later Virginia stood in the middle of the parlor floor, looking about her critically. Her husband had not had time to choose the parlor furniture—fortunately—during those weeks so full of domestic accomplishment preceding their marriage, and Virginia had enjoyed the pleasure of selecting it for herself. She smiled happily for a moment, then gave a deep and contradictory sigh. For there was a very large blot on the landscape—or, rather, on the parlor wall. An immense, badly executed oil painting of Mrs. Jenkins' husband—long dead—occupied the middle of the space facing the door as one entered the room. It had a background of bright purplish blue, which, as Virginia pathetically observed to Calvert, seemed to swear at everything else in the room, and especially the rose-colored furniture.

"Burney," she complained gently, but with conviction, as her husband entered to admire the new "set" with her, "that

painting looks more impossible than ever now, doesn't it?"

Calvert ruefully conceded that it did.

"And," added Virginia, retying the strings of her neat little housewife apron, "aside from being hideous in itself, it's going to be such a very awkward thing to explain to people—callers, I mean."

A ray of sunlight fell across the garish unattractiveness of the picture, and Calvert blinked as he looked at it.

"Explain? What do you mean, honeybunch? I don't understand."

She came and sat on the arm of his chair, smoothing back the straight black lock that always persisted in falling over his left eyebrow. He took her disengaged hand in his own, and kissed it as she continued:

"Why, don't you see, dear, that when visitors ask me who he is—thinking naturally that he must be of great importance to you or me—a big picture like that—I'll have to tell them lamely that he is my husband's adopted mother's second husband? Doesn't that sound sort of awkward to you? And isn't he displayed rather prominently, considering that he was only who he was?"

Calvert smiled consolingly.

"Oh, but you don't need to explain it all out, do you, dear? Can't you just say: 'Oh, he's a relative?'"

"Yes, of course I can," admitted his wife hesitatingly; "but if I don't explain the relationship any more than that—if I answer evasively, that is—won't folks think that the indefinite relative is in jail, or somewhere, or that if he isn't he ought to be?"

"Hm!" exclaimed Calvert, with non-committal caution, and closed his eyes.

It seemed to him that the perplexities incident to domestic life increased in number every day. Mr. Garde and Mrs. Jenkins quarreled persistently, and between Mrs. Jenkins and Virginia there was an unmistakable and settled coldness. His adopted mother, on arrival, had taken full charge of the house and the Swedish maidservant, and since Virginia's advent doggedly continued to

assume the entire managerial responsibility.

"When a young woman has never learned to do anything other than conduct a fashionable kindergarten, how can she expect to know anything about running a house? She ought to be glad that I, who managed help all my married life, am willing to take it off her hands."

Virginia, happening to overhear her holding forth to the timorous Hedda in this fashion, had actually indulged in "words" with Mrs. Jenkins, telling her that while she—Virginia—might be incapable of looking after her household, still, as Mrs. Burnett Calvert, it was her right to do so to the best of her ability, and that she strenuously objected to Mrs. Jenkins belittling her to the maid behind her back. In reply, Mrs. Jenkins had burst into disconcerting tears, and informed Virginia, between sobs, that if she weren't needed there, Burnett Calvert had done very wrong to induce her to leave her comfortable furnished room in Fordham, where she did sewing for a very select circle of patrons, and cruelly remove her from a spot where she was of some use to a place where she was superfluous. She had then fallen into renewed weeping, and Virginia, tender-hearted to a fault, had become immediately remorseful at sight of the bowed gray head, and informed her that she might have all the authority she liked, since she felt that way about it.

Mr. Garde, on his side, seemed to think he was called upon to educate Calvert, especially in regard to the management of womenfolks.

"Maintain your identity!" he would caution him over and over, after surreptitiously summoning him to the stable for a private word. "I'm an old bach, but I've learned a lot about how to keep womenfolks in their place. Don't give in to 'em a minit about nothin'! If you do—you're lost. One of 'em gits you by the ear an' hauls you one way; t'other one takes you by the nose an' hauls you t'other way. 'Twon't do, my boy. Maintain your identity! Whenever they say 'no,' you say 'yes.'



"And isn't he displayed rather prominently, considering that he was only who he was?"

Whenever they say they want anything, tell 'em quick they can't have it, an' don't give it to 'em unless you happen to want it yourself. That's the way to make 'em respect you. I'm sick an' tired of that yelpin' pup out there—he don't let me sleep o' nights. But I ain't goin' to trade him off jest because Mis' Jenkins is so dead set to hev me!"

"I don't think it would be a bad idea to send Major away and get a quieter dog in his place, Father Garde," Calvert had answered gently, glad of an excuse to enter a remonstrance on Virginia's account. "He disturbs my wife, too, quite a little. She's a light sleeper, and he makes a very big noise."

Whereat, "Father Garde" had begun a furious hammering and tinkering at the little tool bench Calvert had bought

to help him put in his spare time pleasantly, muttering disgustedly in his throat something about "henpecked husbands," and he guessed no womenfolks was a-goin' to keep him from maintainin' of his identity—no, sirr-ee! And Calvert had retired, non-plused.

These and other complications passed swiftly through his head as he sat in the new rose-colored armchair, with Virginia nestling against his shoulder.

"I don't really see what we can do about the picture, dear," he said slowly, at last. "I guess we'll have to stand for it. You see, when Mother Antoinette asked me to hang it there, I had no idea how sizable the painting was, nor how glaring. So I told her she was welcome to put it wherever she pleased."

Virginia ceased nestling, and sat up straight.

"But why not in her own room? She has the best and largest in the house."

"And that's my fault, too," Calvert owned humbly.

"When I requested her to choose her own room, I naturally thought she'd take the little sunny one opening onto the upper back porch, where she could sit with her knitting. I never dreamed she'd select the one intended for our own use."

"She's welcome to it," Virginia hastened to assure him. "Perhaps, being older, she ought to have the best one, anyhow—and it's all right—if she'll only hang the picture there."

"But—in his uniform as a Union soldier—mother said she wanted it to show off prominently——"

"Prominently!" echoed Virginia, with a tremulous laugh. "It would do that if hung in the dark in the woodshed. It's the sort of thing from which there is no escape."

"And," argued Calvert soothingly,

"remember he was her husband, my dear."

"Her second one!" reminded Virginia, piqued that, justly or unjustly, her husband seemed somehow to be putting Mrs. Jenkins' wishes before her own. "And she'd welcome a third very quickly if he happened to come along. She has no deep, really deep, feelings on any subject, if that's what you're afraid of. Surely you can ask her to hang the picture in her own room, can't you?"

But Calvert, though inwardly much chagrined at a certain innate selfishness he thought he had detected in Mrs. Jenkins, and at the lack of a certain mother sweetness he had counted on, remained firm on the subject of the picture. His word was his bond, he told Virginia; therefore, the Union soldier, with the purplish-blue background, must continue to occupy the choicest spot on the parlor wall.

At the dinner table that evening Virginia presided with unusual quietude and dignity. Calvert feared that she was resentful as to the stand he had taken about the painting, and his big heart ached. Every time he caught her eye he smiled at her conciliatingly. She invariably smiled back at him, but there was a studied dutifulness in her expression that spoiled the smiles for her husband, and his evening meal was punctuated with unconscious sighs.

Mrs. Jenkins had brought with her to the new home many gowns of rich material and ancient make—relics of former days of prosperity—which she had deemed inappropriate for furnished-room circles, but which came out of retirement now to adorn her presence at the dinner table almost daily. With the gowns, she displayed numerous old-fashioned bracelets, combs, brooches, and chains. And as she steadily increased the elaborateness of her attire, Mr. Garde grew noticeably more remiss in his. This evening he had gone so far as to appear in a collarless shirt. When Virginia saw him reach up and give an elaborate twist of the bright brass collar button, as he eyed the overadorned Mrs. Jenkins, she

knew that he had omitted collar and tie on purpose, and that it was not a case of absent-mindedness, as she had at first supposed.

"Don't you consider it quite inexcusable, Virginia," inquired Mrs. Jenkins softly, but coldly, "for persons to appear at dinner in garments suitable only to paupers and the insane?"

The old man set his cup down in the saucer so hard that it cracked.

"Druther be insane than a naterel-born idiot!" he exclaimed hotly. "There's some dignity to bein' insane, but there ain't to t'other."

"Burnett," cried Mrs. Jenkins appealingly, "will you allow your mother to be insulted like this at your own table?"

"Maintain your identity, Burn!" warned Mr. Garde, before Calvert had collected breath to answer. "Don't let womenfolks run you. You'll be sorry if you do."

"The drooping mulberry tree is blooming out nicely, Virginia," said Calvert cheerfully, trying to change the subject. "Did you notice it, my dear?"

"Yes," replied Virginia, with another dutiful smile; "I noticed it yesterday."

"Which just reminds me," spoke up Mrs. Jenkins suavely, as if somehow relishing the task of conveying a morsel of bad news, "that I saw Major from my window, just before I came down to dinner, attack the little tree, and almost tear it asunder with those dreadful teeth of his."

"Tain't so!" Mr. Garde raised half out of his chair, and smote the table with an irate fist. "Major knows better than to try to eat up the front yard. Which is more'n I can say for that old parrot you let out of her cage this afternoon. If anybody clawed the tree—it was her!"

He dropped back into his chair with a thud, and mopped a perspiring forehead.

"You may be an Episcopalian, Mis' Jenkins—an' your poll parrot, too—but you can't put on airs over me an' Major, I'm telling you."

"Father! Mother!" protested Cal-

vert, his face flushing with pained embarrassment. He had such an instinctive reverence for older folk that reproof came hard. "Can't we have a quiet evening meal for just this once? Look at the peaceful sunset through those west windows. Doesn't it seem to shame all our petty disagreements into silence? Never mind the injury to the mulberry tree. Come, let us have an atmosphere of harmony."

"Harmony?" Mrs. Jenkins almost wailed to indicate how hopeless she considered the proposition. "How can any of us expect harmony, when it is well known that those of the Baptist faith are always prejudiced against those who are Episcopalians, and never hesitate to express that prejudice? Of course, Burnett, I know you meant it as a noble charity when you adopted Mr. Garde——"

"Don't you 'charity' me, Mis' Jenkins!" interrupted the collarless one, getting to his feet, and brandishing a vinegar cruet for emphasis. "To come here, I giv' up a good job as caretaker of a house belongin' to one of the richest men in Fordham—steady pay, an' the hull place to myself while he was gallivantin' round the world an' back ag'in, 'sides havin' laid up a good bank account of my own. But you, Mis' Jenkins, was so run down at the heel that Burn took you in to save you from actual starvation!"

Before replying, Mrs. Jenkins arranged a steel comb in her hair in a manner that made her look as combative as a gamecock ready for a fight.

"I beg to inform you, Mr. Garde, that I had a large and select circle of patrons whom I sacrificed in order to exercise a mother's care over Burnett Calvert."

"Hmph!" snorted the old man derisively. "An' you're a-exercisin' it, all right. Burn's a-bein' smothered this minit under female petticoat guv'ment till he can't call his soul his own."

Calvert laid down his knife and fork.

"After to-night," he said calmly, but with firmness, "there must be no more of this dissension. Neither of you came here as an object of charity, but in the

hope that your presence would give Virginia and myself an added happiness. And I must insist that in future you will both have enough respect for essential religion to avoid denominational bickerings. And—I say it with all kindness—the first one to disregard my request will compel me to order his or her dinner served in his or her room instead of with the family for a week thereafter. Virginia, kindly pass me the pepper sauce."

There was an amazed silence on the part of the old folks. Mr. Garde sat hunched down in his chair, one crooked finger still hooked through the handle of the vinegar cruet. Mrs. Jenkins pushed back from the table and carefully folded her napkin, though dessert had not yet been served, and she was particularly fond of dessert.

Finally Mr. Garde spoke hesitatingly:

"I don't see as a little argiment now an' then ought to be called bickerin' exactly."

For once Mrs. Jenkins almost agreed with him.

"When it comes to being disciplined like a child——" she began; then stopped and swallowed hard. Her sentence was never resumed, however, for a loud squalling was heard in the hall, bringing her instantly to her feet.

"What ails Sapphira? I must have forgotten to lock her cage."

Through the partly open door, the parrot half flew, half waddled into the room, followed by the growling Major. In Sapphira's strong beak was gripped one end of a white lace scarf, and the Major's teeth nipped tightly the other end of the unfortunate piece of finery. Between them they had almost torn it into ribbons.

"My scarf! The one Burney gave me the day we were married!" cried Virginia agonizedly.

Calvert sprang to rescue what was left of it, and, with a sorry face, passed it over to his wife. She put out her arm, the remnants of the torn lace fluttering from her fingers.

"Burney," she said pantingly, "I have endured many things in this



"My scarf! The one Burney gave me the day we were married!" cried Virginia agonizedly.

strange household of ours, for your sake—for your happiness—but this is one thing I do not think I am called upon to put up with any longer. These wretched animals, ruining my beautiful wedding scarf—you see what they have done—the culmination of daily annoyances without number. I demand that they be sent away from here at once and forever—both the parrot and the dog!"

Mrs. Jenkins, with a cry of protest, snatched the parrot to her breast, and the old man ran his hand protectively through the collar of Major.

"May Virginia and I be left to ourselves for a moment?" Calvert asked pleasantly, but in a manner not to be refused. Alone with his wife, he turned to her tenderly, taking her cheeks between his caressing palms.

"Dear little girl, I'll try to see that the animals are not given so much lib-

erty in future, but you don't really mean to ask me to send them away?"

"That's right, Burn! Maintain your identity!" Father Garde had been entirely unable to refrain from listening at the other side of the door, left slightly ajar. "Don't let 'em run ye, boy!" And he shut himself out quickly, in fear of a reprimand.

"It was perhaps unwise on my part," Calvert resumed quietly, ignoring the interruption, "to promise father and mother they should each have what pets here they liked—but it was a part of my bargain, Virginia. I thought pets might make it seem more like a real home to them, and old folks require something to take up their minds. I really cannot ask them to give the animals up."

Virginia looked at her husband piteously. It seemed to her that she was being crushed under this kind but ter-

rible obstinacy of his. It seemed to her all at once that he loved everything and everybody on the place better than he loved his wife.

"You may take your choice, Burney," she said desperately, with a sudden resolve to put his love to the test. "Either that dog and parrot are sent away—either you give me your promise to that effect right while we stand here—or your wife leaves the house before the day is over!"

"You don't mean that for a minute, dear," answered Calvert, with calm and unbelieving patience. "You know I can't go back on my promise to them. You know that as well as I do."

He stooped and kissed her upon the forehead. But for once she did not respond to his caress. Instead, she turned and walked stiffly from the room.

The breakfast this Saturday morning was as quiet and depressing as all breakfasts had been during the three weeks since Virginia—without a word of farewell—had fled from her husband and home. With her had gone, so it seemed to Calvert, all the sunshine she had brought with her into the house, and all she had found there, leaving not a ray behind. But a strange, stubborn something in his nature, the constant encountering of which had caused Virginia to make such a radical move at the last, rose up to prevent his putting forth an effort to recall her to his side. If he had not been entirely fair and just to her in all things, he argued, she knew he believed he had; and, knowing it, she had yet chosen to go. Well, he must still act as a man worthy of her should act—honestly, sincerely, so far as in him lay, no matter if it meant that she remain away from him forever!

"Nice day for a trip, Mis' Jenkins," observed Mr. Garde politely to that lady, toward the close of the morning repast; and Mrs. Jenkins bowed a gracious assent.

The shock occasioned by Virginia's departure had served to bring about a sudden and entire cessation of hostili-

ties between them—something that Calvert by an indefinite amount of remonstrance might never have succeeded in accomplishing. There had not been a ripple on the calm stream of domestic life since the hour when Calvert—white-faced—had told them the news of Virginia's flight.

"Notice how I trimmed up the hedge back of the stable, Burn?" queried Father Garde, as he gulped down the last of his hard-boiled egg. "It's a bang-up job, if I do say it myself as shouldn't. 'Twon't need nothin' done to it for a long time now."

"That's fine, father!" Calvert tried to display an interest he was far from feeling. "I'm glad you are looking out for things."

He laid a kindly hand on the shoulder of the old man, then opened his watch to look at the time, but instead became lost in contemplation of Virginia's face, which gazed up at him tantalizingly from the opposite oval.

"I hope I darned those lavender socks of yours properly," remarked Mother Antoinette anxiously, "and that they feel comfortable on your feet."

"The holes are even better than the socks now," Calvert replied, with careful appreciation. "You darned them in great shape, mother."

"I've looked over everything else you have that needs mending," the old lady continued, "and you oughtn't to have any trouble for a long time now."

Consciously she straightened the elaborate lace collar she was wearing, and fastened her brooch. Something in her movements caused Calvert, for the first time that morning, to take a comprehensive look at her, and at the old man. The expression of complete bewilderment that crossed his face drew out a responsive expression of embarrassment in theirs.

"Why, I declare! Both in holiday garments on a Saturday morning! What's up?"

Mr. Garde fumbled at his necktie with an awkward and shaking hand.

"Me—I'm calculatin' to take a noon train to Fordham. My boss I was caretaker for gits home from England to-

day. He don't know but what I've be'n on the job all the time he's be'n away, an' I want to be on hand to tell him what I've be'n doin'. You don't care, Burn, if I go, seein' as you're home yourself to look after things on Saturdays?"

"Certainly not," Calvert assured him heartily. "It's a good thing for any one to have a change of scene once in a while."

"I'm glad you think so, Burnett," Mrs. Jenkins exclaimed, with a flurried laugh, "because I want to go in to Fordham, too, to call on your old landlady, who was one of my best customers, as you know, and for—for other reasons."

The old man reached for Calvert's hand.

"Shake, Burn, in case I hang on there until—until to-morrow—or next day—mebbe."

"Stay as long as you like, father."

Turning away, Calvert stooped to pick up his morning paper from the chair where he had laid it. As he did so, he felt about his neck the thin arms of Mother Antoinette, and on his cheek the pressure of her withered lips. Calvert was frankly amazed. She had never ventured anything in the nature of a caress before.

"Misther Calvert!"

The little Swedish maid, clearing the table, spoke up with very evident agitation, twisting her apron into hopeless creases.

"What is it, Hedda?"

"It is that I gif warning. To-day it is Saturday—next Monday I go away, and it is for you to get another girl."

The head of the house stared at the maid's pasty, moon-round face in astonishment.

"Why, Hedda, I thought you were very happy here! What makes you wish to leave us?"

There was a marked stir behind him, and, turning, he detected Mr. Garde and Mrs. Jenkins in the act of trying to head off the girl's answer by warning winks and gestures.

"Father! Mother! Do you know why she has made up her mind to go?"

"I don't wish it, Misther Calvert," Hedda explained distressedly, not giving the others time to reply. "I lak you very much, Misther Calvert, but what kind of mens you are to make them all run away from you? I tank it very strange that they all run away, and me—I am afraid to stay all alone. I lak the place—but I am afraid."

"Who is running away, Hedda? I don't know what you mean."

The maid pointed toward Mr. Garde, who was standing with the arm of Mrs. Jenkins drawn protectingly through his own.

"Him! Her! Their trunks went this morning before I called you to get up. And the big picture of the soldier mens from the parlor—it went in the wagon, too. They told me they will not come back here any more. And me—I go, too."

As Mrs. Jenkins met the astonished and reproachful gaze of Calvert, she hid her face against Mr. Garde's arm with an affrighted giggle.

"Jig's up, an' we might as well own to it, Burn," spoke the old man, with dignity real though grotesque. "We're a-leavin' you fer good. The whole thing is that we ain't wantin' to hang on here, where we don't belong, when it's a-drivin' your lawful wedded wife out of where she does belong. 'Course, you thought you was a-doin' right to let her go, stid of the animiles, but it wa'n't right. Trouble is with you, Burn, you're so sot in your ways you git 'em mixed up with the Lord's ways, an' think you can't change 'em! I believe in a man's maintainin' of his identity, an' I ain't goin' back on it, but Virginia's got considerable identity, too, an' me an' Mis' Jenkins don't blame her for wantin' to maintain it ahead of a dog's an' a parrot's, even if they air belongin' to us."

"But, father, I never meant——"

The old man put up a staying hand.

"Lemme finish, now that I'm started. You never meant nothin' but good, I know; but meanin' it ain't always doin' "

it. You meant it all right when you took us in here as sort of machine-made parents, but we ain't a real part of this here shebang of yours, an' never will be. We're old timbers, an' you can't put old timbers into a new house without there's a saggin' or crackin' somewheres to show the difference in the wood. So me an' Mis' Jenkins has concluded to git married this afternoon, an' set up housekeepin' for ourselves where we can argy all the religion we like, an' keep the animals from disruptin' the bosom of any more families. Then mebbe you'll have sense enough to go hunt up your wife."

All during Mr. Garde's speech the doorbell had been ringing violently. No one had told Hedda to answer it, and she had been too much interested in Mr. Garde's unaccustomed outburst of eloquence to think to answer it herself. Suddenly, but very quietly, Virginia walked in from the hall, wearing the same ashes-of-roses gown and the same plume-laden hat as the day her husband had brought her there.

Calvert heard the dear familiar rustle of her garments, but, instead of rushing to her and clasping her in his arms, as he had often imagined himself doing should the miracle indeed occur that was occurring now, he stood motionless. They were all going away from him, he told himself, and she, too, had come but to make their separation a final one. Yes, that, and that only, was what her coming meant.

"Burney," cried Virginia faintly, standing quite close to him, but with her arms falling limply at her sides, "aren't you glad to see me?"

"Yes," he answered woodenly; "I am glad to see you, Virginia—of course I am glad."

"Burney," she cried again, her voice almost drowned by a rising wave of tears, "don't say it like that—as if you did not mean it! You don't know how I have waited and prayed for you to send for me, dear, until at last I had to swallow my pride and come back to

you—uninvited! I could not live another hour without you!"

With a quivering smile, she looked toward the old couple, standing openmouthed at the other side of the table.

"I'll be different, Burney. I'll be kind to father and mother, no matter how many little tiffs they have. They can keep whole menageries of parrots and dogs if they want them, just so you can bring your big, unselfish heart to forgive me and love me again."

With a cry of joy, Calvert caught her roughly to his breast.

"Virginia—my wife! To think you came back to me ready to face it all over again for my sake if I asked it of you! Oh, Virginia!"

"But she don't have to face nothin'!" hastily reminded the old man, as he gave the dazed and wide-eyed Hedda a shove in the direction of the kitchen, and marched with Mrs. Jenkins in her wake. "Tell her she don't, Burn. Tell her 'thout none of us round to be buttin' in."

There was a cozy dinner for two that evening—a situation that Virginia had more than once dreamed of, but never before realized. A peaceful sunset was visible through the west windows. The young couple lingered long at table.

"I suppose," said Calvert, as he sipped his coffee, "that I needn't have bought a house with so many rooms—only I thought that with adopted parents we'd need them."

"Don't worry about the extra rooms," counseled Virginia, a soft flush coming into her pretty cheeks. "Maybe they'll come in good some day—who knows?"

"Hey?" exclaimed Calvert, looking at her with inquiring eyes. The red in her cheeks deepened. "Oh!" he ejaculated understandingly.

He went round the table and kissed her.

"Virginia!" he cried. "This—this is what I call living!"



"THRIFT, THRIFT, HORATIO!"



By
**Anne
O'Hagan**

Author of
"The King's Garrylton Cups,"
"Glendennin's Cook," etc.



ILLUSTRATED BY LAURA E. FOSTER

EILEEN, tearful, the corners of her mouth at an angle of woe, her garments flung upon her after a fashion to denote the extreme of dejection, sought me out early yesterday morning. Eileen, though the most devoted and affectionate of friends, seldom seeks one out early in the morning. She avers that there are no hours so adapted to deep, satisfying slumber as those when all the hard-working world is going to its dull toil. Consequently, it scarcely needed the testimony of her countenance and her attire to tell me that something was seriously wrong with Eileen.

"What is it?" I asked, with the exasperatingly virtuous air of a woman who is conscious that she has been up for several hours, and that she has weeded her chrysanthemum window bed.

"If you ever have any daughters," began Eileen sepulchraly, "and if you happen to love them, inculcate one virtue in them above all others."

I inquired with interest to which virtue Eileen gave preference in the long list compiled for the practice of women.

"Not modesty," she answered me darkly. "Girls are bound to be modest, anyway. That comes natural to them after the generations it's been drummed into them as the whole duty of woman.

And not kindness to parents, or consideration for the aged, or tenderness to the young. And not a cheerful and contented disposition, or the power to take enjoyment in the little, common things which any one may have for the asking! And not loyalty to friendship, and not devotion to the State or any newfangled thing like that. But——"

Eileen paused to wipe her eyes, and to search in her reticule for a handkerchief. Observing that she could not find one, I performed the silent, sisterly service of extracting one from the bureau drawer, and unostentatiously handing it to her.

"Tell them," sobbed Eileen, using the handkerchief to dab about her eyes, "tell them to live by a budget! That's the only way in which they will ever know any peace of mind, ever have the respect of their husbands, ever cease to feel the wretchedest pangs of conscience."

Eileen was chronically and notoriously improvident, but as a usual thing she wore her improvidence gayly, as a rather picturesque garment. Never before had I known it to be the weedy attire of humiliation and woe. And, while I pondered what had wrought the change, Eileen enlightened me.

"I had," she said moistly, "a most horrid quarrel with Terence last night

—a most perfectly horrid quarrel. I think," she added dramatically, "that he may be thinking of divorcing me."

"Because you haven't lived according to a budget?" I inquired somewhat sceptically.

"That's the real reason why," she declared, defiance drying her tears a little. "And yet, when Terence married me, did he tell me he was looking for an expert accountant? Did he intimate that what he needed was a household bookkeeper? Did he——"

I interrupted Eileen's rhetorical questions to ask her a practical one.

"What was it this time?" I demanded. "A 'please-remit' or an 'account-rendered' statement, sent to his office? They are trouble breeders, of course!"

"Worse than that. Oh, my dear, how am I ever going to tell any one, even a kind thing like you? It was a lot worse than that. You see, Terence had brought a man home to dinner last night, a man he wanted to impress, I think. A person from Chicago," she went on dreamily, and I began to fear that she was going to embark upon the history of the entire career of the man from Chicago.

But, catching my eye fixed sternly upon her, she blushed guiltily and came to the point.

"Terence had telephoned," she told me, "and I had everything fixed as attractively as possible. And the dinner was good—Lottie is a good cook, I don't care what any one says about her extravagance and her pilferings. And everything was all very nice. And when we were at the salad—did you ever have one of Lottie's celery-and-nut salads when you came to luncheon or dinner? No? Well, I'll have one the very next time you come."

"Meantime?" I suggested.

"Oh, yes—meantime!" Eileen recalled herself with a start. "Well, meantime, that was where we were at the dinner when the hall bell rang and Lottie was overheard arguing with some one at the door. We heard her say that Mrs. O'Toole was not at home, then that Mrs. O'Toole could not see any one; that she was at dinner—

enough, you would think, to drive away even the most pestiferously importunate person, wouldn't you?"

Eileen seemed to appeal to my unprejudiced sense of the orderly, the fit, and the decent. But, in listening to her tales, it is never wise to be lured into an affirmative until the end of the story is reached. So that, after waiting patiently a few seconds for my sympathetic acquiescence, she sighed, and went on.

"Well, Terry gave one ugly, suspicious look at me—you know how a husband can look?" This time the question was so direct, the pause so long, that I committed myself to a nod; for, as a matter of fact, I *do* know how a husband can look! "Well, he looked at me like that, and when Lottie came in finally and said that it was a man who said he'd wait until Mrs. O'Toole had finished dinner—he didn't want to inconvenience a lady, Lottie reported his saying—Terry, black as a thundercloud, said he would see him. But I said no; I said that he undoubtedly was the little German tailor from around the corner—didn't the Chicagoan think that the Germans were the most persistent people in the world? And then I slid out to the hall, feeling quite faint. Of course, I knew it was a dun—who but a dun would come to the house like that, and refuse to state his name or errand? But what dun? That was the question worrying me. There's one comfortable thing about living in the slough of despond, whose other name is debt—you can generally emerge after six o'clock, and Sunday is a closed season for debtors! I suppose that bill collectors have hours like the rest of the working world—have homes that they go to, supper tables where they eat and discuss politics! Funny, isn't it?"

Again Eileen seemed to muse upon the incomprehensibility, the quaint incomprehensibility, of the world. But my uncompromising silence warned her to proceed with her tale.

"He was a dumpy man in a rusty-looking overcoat," she told me, with eyes full of pain. "I didn't know him, I had never seen him before. He



"I slid out to the hall, feeling quite faint."

wasn't the mending tailor, or the corner cobbler, or the newspaper boy, or the local laundry, or the boot cleaner from the elevated corner. I know all of them quite well—I don't mean because they are so often obliged to dun me; they are not," she added virtuously. "I always try to keep the little people paid up. They can't afford to be kept waiting. It's different with the big shops. But this man I had never seen before. I didn't like his looks at all—although there seemed something vaguely familiar about him, even if I couldn't place him. He ducked his head respectfully enough—think of the absurdity of it all! I was actually dressed in my new rose voile dinner dress! And he asked me if I was Mrs. Terence O'Toole. I said that I was—I'm still enough of a goose about Terry, so I always feel a trifle tall and proud when I say it! And then he told me that he had a paper to give me from Lowery & Steinholdt. I put

out my hand like a ninny, saying 'Lowery & Steinholdt? Who are they?' 'They are the attorneys for the Misses MacMarsters,' he snapped back. 'Mr. Steinholdt expected to have an answer to the letter he wrote you a few days ago.' And then I remembered that I had had a letter from a firm named that a few days before, in regard to those dreadful MacMarsters women, who ruined my foulard in the spring and never sent me my pongee until September.

"And I said haughtily that I really hadn't the time to reply to the communication. He grinned at me—positively grinned! And he bowed, and said that he would advise me to take time to attend to the communication in my hand, if I wanted to avoid contempt-of-court proceedings. I looked at it—and, my dear, it was a horrid thing that almost scorched my fingers. It was a subpoena—an order for me to appear in



"He demanded to know what I was trying to conceal in my bosom."

some loathly municipal court on some loathly date and tell some loathly judge why I thought I ought not to pay the loathly MacMarsters women for their ruined work in the summer. But I didn't think of the outrageous injustice of it then; I only thought how I, Eileen O'Toole, Eileen Desmond that was, had brought such disgrace on two family names! I felt sick. And, as I stood there in my gay new dress, with the awful thing burning my fingers, it suddenly came over me what there was familiar about the looks of that old, rusty creature there. He was a lineal descendant of all those bailiffs and descendants that used to take possession of the Micawber household or the Rawley Crawdon person, or any household or person in the English novels."

"What did you do?"

I could not forbear feeling inquisitive. The ordinary social code makes

no provision for such an emergency; there are no rules—no "do-es" or don'ts for the lady summoned in a suit for debt when she is giving a dinner party.

"Oh, I merely said that if that was what he came for, he might consider his errand done, and I twisted the horrid paper up, as though I were going to burn it without any further study. And he grinned again, and said impudently that he was sorry to have disturbed me, and he went. And I stood with that dreadful thing in my hand for a second, positively too upset to go back to the dinner table. And as I was stuffing it down the low neck of my pink frock, Terry came scowling

from the dining room, with his napkin in his hand, and such a thundercloud of a look on his face! He inquired aloud, quite audibly, if I was through with the little German tailor at last, and not nearly so audibly he demanded to know what I was trying to conceal in my bosom, and he put out his hand for it, and, if you can credit it, I actually handed it to him! My dear, if you could have seen the look he bestowed on me before we went back to the table!

"Of course, I apologized to the Chicagoan, and Heaven, which is kind to me in some ways if not in others, actually gave me two funny anecdotes of the German tailor to reel off as if they had just happened; even Terence smiled at them. And then I played a while for the wretched Chicagoan, and, by and by, he left, and then Terence had his reckoning with me. And that is why I say to every woman who has

daughters to train them to live upon the budget system, if they die of it. Otherwise their lives will be a nightmare and their homes will be horrible."

Eileen wept a little more, but somewhat less bitterly now, into a dry handkerchief. I proffered vague comfort—of course, she could pay the MacMars-
ters sisters' bill and not have to go into court; of course, it was too bad it had happened, but, after all, the worst was over now. Terence knew of her obloquy, her ignominy, her crime, and, having had his fit of anger and disgust, would probably simmer down gradually into the ordinary, more-or-less contented husband. And, perhaps, the incident would teach her a little wisdom.

Eileen took my harsh comfort sadly. She shook her pretty head—I think that her shortcomings would be visited more severely upon her if she were not so pretty.

"My dear," she told me sadly, and with a note of sincere and rather pathetic conviction in her voice, "I'm afraid there is no hope for me. I'm afraid I'm a dyed-in-the-wool improvident. They tell me," she added, with a gleam of interest in an extraneous matter, "that it is proposed to drop a test tube into every baby's mouth, or something of that sort, and to learn at once whether he is going to grow up to be a captain of industry and a president, and all that, or a degenerate and a delinquent and a criminal; if it isn't with a clinical thermometer, it is with some sort of wonderful instrument that one's possibilities are to be judged hereafter.

"And if you're a subnormal baby, they will clap you into a sort of State farm, where you can work healthily at weeding potatoes or something until you die, and where you can't marry and go on propagating your subnormal stock, and where you can't mingle with your fellow beings and rob and murder them. It's very wonderful and very dreadful, and I'm glad I shall be dead before they get their new, little system working. But, meantime, if they'd only make an instrument which would indicate at once, the minute you came squealing

into the world, whether or not you were going to be an improvident, and, if you were, could immure you where you could never acquire a husband to reproach you with your bad management, well, I'd be in favor of that plan, wouldn't you?"

"It's all a question of making up your mind not to live beyond your husband's income," I told her. "There's nothing occult about it."

"My dear," sighed Eileen, "it's being born with the blood of improvidents in your veins, and it's being raised on the charge-account system. I honestly believe that the charge account has ruined more homes, caused more failures, brought larger grist to the divorce mill, than any other single cause. I believe that it is altogether pernicious and useless. It is designed solely to tempt people to buy things that they haven't the money to pay for, in order that they may work harder and strain harder to get the money. And I was raised on that system. Mother had everything charged. If she wanted a new dress—the poor saint seldom wanted one for herself!—she would buy it, and have it charged. If the parlor carpet was awfully shabby, and we didn't have the ready money to pay for a new one, she'd buy it, and have it charged. If company came from the country and she wanted an extra fine dinner, it was always easy enough to have it—the butcher and the baker and the grocer were all charge accounts.

"Of course, she was always behind in her accounts. I wonder if she ever faced the world squarely, conscious, like that detestable village blacksmith, that she 'owed not any man'? I don't believe it. Her problem was never to pay all the bills, but to pay enough on each bill each month to 'keep them quiet.' And every now and then there'd come a ruction, a family flare-up, and father would raise a few hundred more dollars on the house, or would sell a bond, and we'd clear everything up, and begin again. That's the way I was raised. And I love all sorts of pretty things, all sorts of elegancies. It's a fatal combination, my dear woman."

"Don't you run your house on an allowance?" I asked her sternly.

"I say that I do, and Terence hands me a check every month for the sum we agreed on as proper for the housekeeping when we were married. But do I keep my expenditures within that sum? Not at all! I buy what I want, what I like the looks of, without the slightest regard for that household check. And I adopt my mother's plan of giving them all enough to keep them quiet. Some months I let the butcher wait, and pay the importunate grocer. Some months I hold him up, and settle with the furniture repairer. Then I steal—you needn't look shocked; it is stealing, even though it's merely from the housekeeping account to my own—in the months when I simply have to pay the dressmaker and the tailor for the clothes they made me the season before! I am never any nearer the present than that!

"And now Terry threatens me with a hideous humiliation; he threatens to take over the payment of everything into his own hands; to limit my expenditures at the stores and with the dressmakers, and generally to treat me as a person unworthy of trust. Which," she added, with calm honesty, "I am, although I swear that a more honest-meaning person does not exist. You think I mean to be honest, don't you?" she added pleadingly.

I told her that I knew she meant to be honest, that she was honest in every strict meaning of the term, that she never intended to deceive, and that she never defrauded.

"It's true," she said, nodding appreciatively. "I haven't the very slightest intention of taking or of keeping a cent that belongs to any other person! And yet, my dear, when I went storming to my little milliner's last fall, mad as a hornet because she had dunned me, how do you suppose I felt about my honesty and that of other women like me when I learned that she hadn't been able to send her sick sister out of the city for the summer because of unpaid bills? Do you suppose I felt that I had redeemed my honesty when I paid

her then with interest? Interest! No interest in the world was going to give that invalid girl the summer she had lost! I felt like a murderer in the making—like one of those subnormal people they're going to segregate by and by, where they can't do any harm to the world! And yet I am accounted a rather kind-hearted woman."

There was no denying that fact; even as she reproached herself and looked forlorn over the case of the milliner's sister, I felt pretty sure that she had done what she could to assist the girl. I mentioned the belief to her, and she admitted it, but without any brightening of the face.

"Oh, yes," she said, "I decided not to pay the two-month-old bill of the firewood man, and to make the milliner's sister a present instead. Doubtless the firewood man had a wife and child suffering desperately for want of the money, but, as he hadn't happened to mention the fact, it didn't hurt my sensitive feelings. Yes, I'm very kind-hearted!"

A light of earnestness replaced the self-contempt on her face.

"I'm going out on a crusade against debt," she told me. "I'm going to preach the pay-as-you-enter doctrine, and I'm going to insist upon its corollary—if you can't pay, don't enter. It will be like the old-fashioned temperance oratory, where the moving appeals were always delivered by a reformed drunkard, by a gentleman who knew what he was talking about. Now I should know what I was talking about when I counseled all women to steer clear of debt, to avoid the wiles of the credit system, to regard as an arch enemy the suave-mannered clerk who says, 'Charge, madam?' and thereby puts it into one's mind that there is a pleasant, easy way to get what one wants without the trouble of paying for it. If you stop to think for a moment, you know well enough that no shopkeeper on earth is running his business on a credit basis because it is for the profit of his customers. He's doing it for his own benefit, and no other person's. And he makes his profit! You

know I have accounts at half a dozen of the big stores. Well, I have noticed a thousand times that the stores which are advertising wonderful sales of things I really need are always the other stores. My shops are selling out only the lines I don't need and don't want, but I have to buy from them, because I'm always in debt to them.

"I never have ready money—any to speak of, I mean—because I have always had to spend my allowance the minute I receive it, trying vainly to catch up with the bills! And I really believe what Terence once told me—that the shops which encourage the charge-account system were obliged to charge more for their goods than those which didn't, because they had to cover bad debts and slow payers, like me, and all that sort of thing. He said that those things were reckoned in as carefully as was their rent and lighting costs, their salary lists, and the like. They are able to calculate that slow customers and bad customers who necessitate the employment of collectors, of a whole staff of clerks, of lawyers, maybe, are going to cost them so much money, and that dishonest customers, who are going to be able to swindle them out of so much goods, are going to cost them so much more, and they simply have to tack those charges on to the price they charge for goods.

"But even if everything were as cheap at Please Chargitt's as it is at Pay-as-You-Enter's, the fatal weakness of the average female intellect ought to be a reason against opening a charge account. It is so hard for women to resist the immediate purchase of the thing that is going to make their homes prettier—or themselves. Ex-

cept the perfectly Spartan characters whose ancestors have transmitted a respect for the budget system which can't be eradicated from their natures, and the vulgarly rich, it's misery for us all.

"Haven't you ever noticed," she went on, "signs in the windows of cheap furniture houses and cheap clothing houses: 'Your credit is good here—one dollar opens an account?' They have always seemed pitiful and tragic to me, those signs. One knew that poor women, passing them and longing with all their hearts for a new plush sofa, because they wanted the parlor to be 'nice' for Mamie's young man, or a new lemonade set for the baby's christening, or a new outfit for the boy who had just gotten his working papers—oh, one knew how those signs were going to lure them in to buy things at twice their value, to become the dumb, driven



I told her that I knew she meant to be honest.

victims of installment-house collectors, to be worried half to death if the man of the family talked of a strike, or coughed, or took a glass of beer at the corner saloon—if any one of a thousand perfectly natural and likely things happened to threaten the integrity of the weekly pay envelope.

"Well, will you kindly tell me where I differ from those poor women, except in the fact that Terence stops in at the club instead of the corner saloon, and that he doesn't have a weekly pay envelope, but a monthly check? Except that I haven't the excuse those poorer women have, of being fairly starved for something new and pretty? Why am not I and ten thousand other middle-class women in New York, who are really rather proud in our hearts of our husbands' financial standing, which enables us to say languidly at Tiffany's, 'Charge, please,' and to feel ourselves thereby the peer of Mrs. Midas—why are not we like the poor installment-house dupes whose sad condition the public prints hold up to us every little while?"

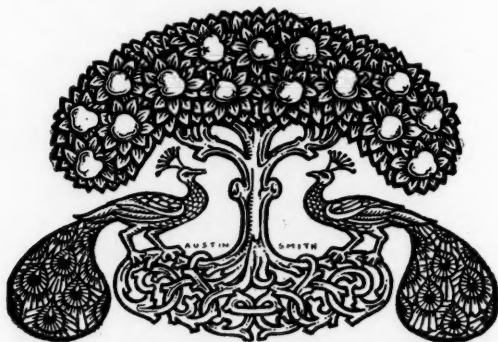
"There's no sense in abusing a perfectly good system because you haven't been able to use it properly," I told Eileen. "Credit and charge accounts are so common, so universal, that the fact that a store permits them does not appreciably increase the cost of the goods they have on sale. Of course, if any of them gave a discount for cash, that

would be another matter. But, as far as I know, they don't. To charge things simplifies shopping. It is a convenience—always insisting, however, that it is a system not abused."

"Exactly what the advocates of moderate drinking always replied to the temperance orator!" cried Eileen triumphantly. "But all these scientific persons, who show what a diminution in energy even one drink a day makes in a man, are proving the old-fashioned temperance orator right, and the advocate of moderate drinking wrong. And some time, when I have formed my Reformed Debtors' Club, I shall be able to prove exactly the same thing in regard to the temperate use of the account system. The whole trouble with it is that there isn't any such thing!"

And, looking greatly refreshed by the unburdening of her mind, Eileen rose to go.

"Some time, when you're writing about the black crime of not allowing wives an allowance," she observed casually, "you might put in a paragraph or two on the importance of learning to handle an allowance and to live within it. A budget, an allowance, and a pay-as-you-enter conscience, and you will know the beautiful paths of peace! Otherwise"—her face lengthened lugubriously again—"some fine night you'll learn what the lineal descendant of those dreadful bailiffs of the English novels looks like."





The Champion

By Nalbro Bartley

Author of "Shadows," "The Measuring Stick," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY SIGURD SCHOU

MRS. MURPHY looked at her daughter philosophically.

"The prize ring," she said solemnly. "So that's what your intended is after! The prize ring—a noble profession."

Addie Murphy looked out the window at the row of crooked frame shacks to hide her angry tears.

"It's been misrepresented," she told her mother defiantly. "It's a grand career—if you get in right. The boxing-commission laws has changed things. A boxer champion gets a better room at a hotel than a minister."

"Addie, you're setting your own alarm clock," warned her mother, as she piled the breakfast things in a heap, preparing to break through the narrow door. "You let that boy of yours go ahead, and he'll come limping home without a second shirt to his back. What's he got to make a champion out of?"

"Legs," unexpectedly flashed back her daughter, with a disregard for conventional language, "and good ones. Arms—and strong ones." The rose flush in her cheeks deepened as she spoke, and a twinkle in the Irish blue eyes drove away the lingering tears. "He's got a chest measurement that teases every boy in the ward. He's got muscles that keep the promoters awake thinking about. He's got brains."

"That last is a surprise," commented her mother, as she disappeared under the stacks of dishes.

Left alone, Addie Murphy set her two pink, curved lips in a firm line. She

laid aside her sewing, and searched in her purse to find a five-cent piece. Then she slipped a bright pink shawl over the crinkly brown hair, a lingering remnant of old country days, and tiptoed out the front door.

A moment later she was standing in a strained position, in order to reach the mouthpiece of the drug-store pay telephone.

"Stockyards?" she asked, in a stage whisper. "Then I'd like to speak with Mr. McGee. Yes, Waffle McGee."

She resumed a natural standing posture, and bowed in a dignified manner at the listening clerk.

"Hullo, Waffle," she continued presently. "This is Addie. Oh, you knew who it was, did you? I came away from my work to talk about the prize fighting. You didn't mean it, now, did you? You're crazy! Give up a good job for getting batted in the eye. Waffle, listen to me; I'm not going to stand for it. I don't care if it is a public telephone; this isn't any time to act offish. You mayn't be talking to me again so soon. Yes, that's so, and you'll know I mean it. *What?* Waffle, you aren't yourself. You give notice? My Gawd! No, I ain't going to stand listening to a maniac any longer. I'm disgusted. I'm infuriated."

The receiver was snapped back into place promptly, and, ignoring the drug clerk's grin, she flew out the store, down the narrow street, into the front parlor, where she unwound her fleecy shawl with quivering, indignant fingers.

"He's given notice at the yards," she



"So that's what your intended is after! The p.ize ring—a noble profession."

burst out, as her mother came to the doorway, and stood against the plush curtains. "Says he's got Bill Kennedy, the sporting promoter, to place him for a boxing match. Ain't it awful? He's going to be billed as 'The Mysterious Waffle.' It makes me that mad I want to be muzzled lest I get after him. He's going to box with Herman Steiner, the big Dutcher that can twist iron bars in two. The Dutcher's going on the cards as 'The Sausage Bender.' Can you see it, ma? 'The Mysterious Waffle versus The Sausage Bender' And the Dutcher's been keeping steady company with Lizzie Schmidt longer than Waffles and me. I'm wild! I'm going to the priest!"

"So," said Mrs. Murphy, in a tone of suppressed sympathy, "you ain't anxious for Waffle to show off his champion legs and arms. You gotta break it off."

"You mean it?" A quiver crossed the pink cheeks.

"I mean it," Mrs. Murphy's ample form swayed back and forth as she placed her hands, wet from dishwater, on her hips. "You're crazy not to. He's going to make a sweet champion. Those uptown guys with starched shirts and fancy canes want to make money off him. There's a lot that'd pay to see Waffle get beat up by The Sausage Bender. I know. I'm surprised, Addie

Murphy, that you stop to think twice. A pretty boy he'll be when he comes off the mat. Prize fighter! I'd rather see you married to an Orangeman any day."

"He'll quit the ring," muttered her daughter prophetically. "I'm going to break up that idea right from the start."

Later in the afternoon Waffle McGee and his rival, Steiner the Sausage Bender, were seated awkwardly in an uptown hotel lobby. Opposite them, flipping his gloves and cane carelessly against the sofa arm, was Bill Kennedy, fight promoter. He tilted his square-cut derby hat rakishly over his eyes as he listened to the newcomers murmur their apprehensions.

"You boys are going to make a name for yourselves," he told them, in a brother-to-brother tone of voice. "I'm the lucky dog to be able to book you. We want new men. We need fresh stock. Take this coming match—nothing but has-beens. No interest in it. You fellows will draw good. You'll be as big as the stars. I'll look back with pride and say: 'I discovered Waffle McGee and Steiner the Sausage Bender.' Don't lose your nerve, kids, get into training, get whipped into shape. Leave the rest to me. I've handled all kinds. Nothing less than a three-thousand-dollar gate. And you boys will be where you can dictate terms to every sporting manager in sight. Look at Gotch, running over Europe hardly speaking to the nobility." He prodded Steiner in the ribs. "Did you shoot the punk game you were playing at?"

Steiner shook his head.

"Not yet a while," he admitted, with Teutonic craftiness.

"You bet I did," Waffle McGee answered. "I told them at the yards if they wanted to talk with me they would find me at the Athletic Gymnasium."

"Now you're living," Kennedy assured him enthusiastically. "I'll just break open a bottle of wine on the head of that. You're a plunger, old top."

He led the two bewildered amateurs into a grillroom. They sat at a table, ill at ease, to watch with fascinated eyes the sporting promoter leisurely puffing

a black Havana. By and by they grasped the slender wine goblets with the strength of fingers used to steins and tin pails, and sipped the champagne Kennedy bought them for his own amusement. By the time the bottle was emptied Waffle was prepared to challenge any one in the boxing game, and Steiner was on the verge of writing out his resignation at the iron foundry.

The promoter licked his chops, and chuckled inwardly. The boxing game, like other games, has its own particular seamy side. The new reform in the prize-fighting world, like other reforms, is stretched to cover a multitude of sins. While the boxing commission sits in judgment upon tournaments, amateur meets, professional ring games, and waves a threatening, open palm in the direction of the successful promoters, the same old-time, hard-fisted, gory sport of knocking the next fellow down and out continues. No thoroughbred is going to pay a couple of bucks to see two able-bodied citizens waltz up to each other, do a mild turkey trot, give a slight face massage, and waltz out again. They want the regular blow-for-blow, "kill-'em, kill-'em" time. They want all the blood and rough stuff that can be crowded into an evening.

And the promoters see they get it. Whether the fighters cram a sack of pigeon's blood into their mouths, to break at a crucial moment, so the effect is that of a smashed nose, or whether the actual damage to bones and tissue takes place—the atmosphere of battle, murder, sudden death is unchanged.

And Kennedy, promoter for twenty years, meant that it should stay so. He saw possibilities in the two young giants before him. Good possibilities in the way of money. Kennedy needed ready money. And both young giants had hosts of envious friends and enemies who would make up the greater share of his three-thousand-dollar gate.

Steiner had murmured something about pay. But Kennedy looked at him in scorn, and turned to Waffle McGee for approbation. Waffle, flushed with wine and the fact that an old school chum of his was obliged to wait on him

in the way of cigars and matches, gave a darting glance of grieved surprise at the mercenary Steiner.

"Pay?" he jeered, to Kennedy's edification. "Pay, it is? We don't want to see the color of money, Dutcher. We're getting in right."

He leaned back in his chair, to smile adoringly at the promoter.

"You bucks must see how it is," said Kennedy easily. "Take the match you get your première at. First place, the stars, the so-called professional stars, are done to death. The public goes because it's the thing in the sporting world. The real sporting public will be there. Eddie Lenny, from Chicago, Malligan from Toronto, and Slim Brice from Seattle. Can you beat that three of a kind? Now, you boys have the chance of making the stars look sick. Getting challenges and bookings from coast to coast. Another cigar, Steiner, sure, come on. They grow 'em in a back room here."

Steiner reached out to take the Havana with cautious, heavy fingers. He nodded deliberately.

"I see," he admitted.

Waffle gave a click of impatience. That one should linger over a mere detail such as money. Kennedy suppressed a smile. The big wrestling match upon which he banked for the three-thousand-dollar gate was one between the well-known French champion and the Big Pole. The public had grown a little weary of Kennedy's numerous events, and the gate dropped down to the five-hundred-dollar limit only recently. With the craftiness of a manager, he realized the scores of friends the two amateurs as preliminaries would bring. There would be no passes issued except to the regular bunch of grafting city hall officials and the press. Whether the house was packed with First Wardites who came to see the Irish beat the Dutch, or with Second Wardites who sat stolidly by waiting for the Dutch to lay the Irish in a disjointed heap—mattered little.

The professionals should have their guarantee, all expenses paid, every one very happy. And Kennedy had a sure

thing to play his wad on as soon as it was his. He put up one smooth, white hand to hide a flitting smile. Waffle gasped in admiration at the good-luck diamond that winked across at him.

"You'll be wearing those in your underclothes," Kennedy said, catching the expression.

Steiner bit the end off his cigar.

"I'm going to keep my job until the day after," was all he offered.

Waffle jeered again.

Leaving the hotel, the rival athletes separated from their manager and each other. Somewhat sheepishly, with a sort of come-to expression, Waffle retraced his footsteps down to the First Ward, to a certain narrow street with numerous frame cottages. At the side door of one of these he paused, rapping timidly.

"Come in," said Addie Murphy from behind. "I've been waiting."

This admission telling in his favor, Waffle strutted into the little parlor, and stretched himself familiarly on the sofa. He held out one long, strong arm indulgently. But she turned away.

"It's no time for love-making, my mighty warrior!" She glared at him angrily. "Waffle McGee, if your mother had lived to see this day! It's crazy you are—crazier than the chickens that try to go on the stage, the ones you laugh at when you see 'em walking by with tight skirts and velvet shoes. It's crazier you are than your kid brother with his yellow-back detective stories. It's a shame the saints can't take the time to rawhide you themselves. A champion! Where did you get the germ from, Waffle, dear? Where did you—tell us, now do."

She rose and paced the floor majestically. "It'll be silk shirts you'll want next, and your coffee in bed, a shave every day, and a manicure by one of them blondes. I know. I've seen that sort when I passed by. Did you get that last, Waffle? I said when I *passed by*! I wouldn't have entered one of them hotels where the fighters and the chickens hang out if it was on my dying knees. I'd die in the honest street first. A champion! Now, tell me, Waffle,

dear, how do you expect to support a wife? Perhaps you didn't mean it when you took me to Father Gerry, and he talked to us. You couldn't have been thinking of the ring then—you promised too easy about paying for our furniture on the installment plan." She caught her under lip with a little quiver. "Remember, Waffle, we picked out the golden-oak dining-room set, and the red velvet parlor suite? We was going to have a 'Good-luck' range in the kitchen, and a lot of shiny saucepans hanging up in a row over the stove. You never thought of being a champion then—and you were happy."

"Say, Addie, cut that soft stuff!" muttered the embryo champion on the sofa. "You make a fellow feel as if he was waiting to be shot at sunrise. Get a gait on you, and chase your brain downstairs. It's going to be one blaze of glory for you. I thought of that when I was deciding."

"That's the best lie you ever choked over," she retorted. "Go on and tell me about the blaze of glory. Sure, I never asked for anything but babies to love, and a chance at church raffles."

"It'll be diamonds for you; it'll be them hotels to live in. You don't know what you're missing. You'll be pointed out as the wife of Waffle McGee, heavy-weight champion. You'll be interviewed by them lady reportresses. You'll be traveling all over the map, and seeing life."

He smiled patronizingly.

Every bit of love in her Irish blue eyes turned to blazing indignation as she looked at the six-foot, broad-shouldered boy across from her, who had broken



"Yes, that's so, and you'll know I mean it."

away from her apron strings. The latent suffragette, which exists in every feminine make-up, no matter how deceptive the exterior, rose to the surface.

"You can take your diamonds that you'll win punching the other fellow's softer head, and give 'em to some chicken," she panted. "You can take your hotels and wear 'em on your watch chain instead of my picture. I ain't cut out for that sort of insanity. Neither are you. You're crazy! The blood at the stockyards has gone to your head. I'm going to Father Gerry. I'm going to see Lizzie Schmidt again. I'm not going to see you be taken out of the ring a corpse."

"Taken out nothing—you don't think I'll let the Dutcher win?"

He looked at her in injured surprise.

For a brief second the chance of triumphing over a hated race swayed her decision. Then she shook her head stubbornly.

"You'll both come out of the ring with tin ears and flattened beaks," she prophesied. "You can't train in a month

for that stuff. He's lying to you. He's making game of you. You're worse than a sixteen-year-old girl with a new pair of tight shoes and a first beau. He's got you where he wants you. But you ain't going to stay."

"What did you mean by seeing Lizzie Schmidt again?" asked Waffle sullenly.

The words "tin ears and flattened beaks" had an unpleasant jangle. Waffle was not acquainted with mythology, but unconsciously he had often posed before the mirror to absorb the almost perfect lines of his Apollo Belvedere profile.

"I went to Lizzie Schmidt. We had to get together," she admitted defiantly. "There's times when you can't stop to pick out the friends you want. How do you think I found her? Sitting in a corner, her tight yellow curls all out of kink, her doll-baby blue eyes crying so hard she couldn't see who was coming. She's lost two pounds since Steiner told her he was going into the ring. They've broke off." Again the faint quiver in the voice, and the sudden catching of the pink under lip. "And Lizzie Schmidt is going to Holy Heart Convent—to—take—the—veil!"

She paused dramatically.

A faint look of surprise crept into Waffle's scornful countenance. Then his manhood asserted itself.

"To take the veil," he repeated slowly, "and it's more sense Lizzie Schmidt has got than some others."

Addie Murphy faced him, one blaze of indignation.

"You mean——" she threatened.

"I mean," he retorted, "that a woman is a hampering weight to a man's career. She drags him down, away from the public eye."

"Where's the glory you promised?" she pursued. "The diamonds, the hotel life, the public pointing to me as the wife of the champion, the reportresses putting my name next to a lot of pink teas?"

"I was kidding you," Waffle said brutally. "I gotta cut out the skirt stuff if I'm going to make good in the ring!"

The rose flush died from Addie Mur-

phy's rounded cheeks, and the blue eyes grew dark.

"So you're going back on your word," she told him calmly. "I'm sorry I didn't beat you to it. Good-by, Mr. Waffle McGee. When you get shot in the foot for a few dollars by your promoter, and for a few more by your press agent, and then get maimed for life, drop in and see Terry Owen and me. We'll be living with his people the first year, but they're hospitable. Mrs. Owen always liked your mother. Maybe Lizzie Schmidt will pray for you and the Dutcher when she has her recreation hour."

One small, quivering finger pointed to the doorway.

"Aw, wait a minute, we can fix it ——" A realization of what was happening managed to penetrate through the brain-befogged cranium.

The finger wiggled severely. A heavy step sounded behind. Waffle had more than once, as a small boy, felt the hand of Addie's mother on his coat collar when caught with a box of matches in her back yard.

"I didn't mean," he mumbled, as he made his way out the small door.

Addie turned to confront her mother. "The alarm clock has went off," she said brokenly.

Mrs. Murphy turned diplomatically away.

Bill Kennedy, having sent word to his protégés that they must be weighed in at the gymnasium the following afternoon, was told by a hop that two ladies wished to see him in the hotel parlor.

The hop smiled as Kennedy asked their names.

"Didn't give none; one ain't wearing a lid."

An alarmed look replaced the perplexed frown.

"Show 'em in the side room," he advised, dropping a fair-sized coin into the ready palm.

He strolled nonchalantly into the anteroom, to find a small, slender little person with a pink shawl thrown over her curly head moving quickly from chair to chair to try the effect of the

different styles. A plump, stolid girl sat in one corner of the sofa, a small felt sailor perched mournfully on her round head, and a suspicious red look in her eyes.

"I am speaking to——" began Kennedy, with his regulation catch-'em-the-first-word attitude.

"I'm Waffle McGee's girl," burst out the small person in the pink shawl. "My name is Addie Murphy. This is Lizzie Schmidt. She's kept company with the Dutcher—that's Steiner—longer than Waffle and me. I wanted to see you—we wanted to see you about this prize-ring talk. Before I go any further, Mr. Kennedy, I want to tell you why I'm doing the talking. I'm Irish. She's Dutch. She feels, but she can't get it across. What I say for me goes for her. Double it every time, and you've got us both. She's going to take the veil if Dutcher don't leave the ring."

"The veil?" politely queried Kennedy.

"Into the convent, be a nun," explained Addie, with scorn for his ignorance. "She's broke her heart over that hulk of a Sausage Bender."

"I see."

Kennedy sat down beside the future novice, who nodded stoically.

"I ain't," volunteered Addie Murphy vivaciously. "I'm going to marry another fellow—Terry Owen. Look here, Mr. Kennedy, you're not playing square with our fellows. You've got them where they'll eat out of your hand, and you know it isn't straight. I don't understand about your fights. But I understand about Waffle McGee's bump of conceit. He's all right for slugging an Orangeman on the towpath. He can win out at any back-yard wrestling match, with a bunch of kids for spectators. But when you put him in the ring, and tell a professional crowd to watch out for good work—he's no more use than a fifth wheel is to a wagon. He ain't got the yeast to be a champion. He's plain dough. Mr. Kennedy"—she shot her small fist defiantly out under the promoter's nose—"you're bleeding them for money. You've made them both pass up good jobs.

You're going to draw a big house at two bones a seat for their friends to come up and laugh. You're going to slip in your own stale stars, and be able to make money. I'm wising up to this fight game. I laid awake all night figuring it out."

"Miss Murphy, you are in error," Kennedy pleaded. "Your friend, Waffle McGee, has a great future——"

"At the stockyards," she finished. "Don't try to palm over any of that with me. I tell you I'm next. Why don't you guys with white hands and a necktie for every day in the year ever try to make an honest living? Work is a great pal if you get acquainted right. You don't bluff me. A man that can bluff the women can't get by the men. A man that puts it over on the men don't fool the women. You can get these greenies where you want, but you can't take their girls and do the same. I didn't come up here without a sacrifice to my pride." Her under lip gave its telltale little quiver. "I could marry a steadier fellow to-morrow than Waffle—if I wanted to. So could she." She turned protectingly to the fat little figure dumped in the sofa corner. "But Lizzie's chose the spiritual life. She'll make a grand mother superior some day when you and the Dutcher and Waffle McGee are doing time for holding a fight on Sunday afternoon. But I don't want to marry a steadier fellow, Mr. Kennedy. And Lizzie ain't crazy holding hands with the convent. That's the trouble. You see, we're—fond—of—them—no-goods."

"I see," said Kennedy, smiling at the tender light in the dark eyes.

"When you're—fond of a person," admitted Addie Murphy shyly, "you'll do a lot of things you wouldn't think of doing beforehand. I didn't ever think I'd come walking into a hotel and ask for a strange man. But I did. Waffle and me went to the priest a little while ago; we told him we were going to be married. The banns was going to be read for the first time next month. Everybody in our ward knows that. We've kept company since we were toddlers. When his mother was dying, she



They grasped the slender wine goblets with fingers used to steins and tin pails.

held my hand, and told me to keep Waffle straight. I was sixteen then. Mr. Kennedy, you ain't the sort that's fond of the home life. I can't place you with carrying a sick kid around in the middle of the night, or helping put in the screens. You don't qualify. You're meant to be right where you are—with a bell hop to hand you things on a silver tray, and a lot of dress-up girls to sit down and drink your wine. And maybe that's right, in its own time and place. I suppose somebody has to be stung with these hotels. But it don't go for all. It don't go for Waffle, Mr. Kennedy; it don't go for the Dutcher. They're the other sort. Why don't you

let them alone?" She threw her hands out appealingly. "Why don't you let them alone?"

"I'm extremely sorry," mildly interrupted Kennedy, "but you don't seem to realize that these young gentlemen begged to come into the game, have been begging for some little time, and it was only because I fancied it was for the——"

"I realize." Addie Murphy dropped her hands listlessly. "But you don't tell them the truth. You let them beg until you think they might be useful, and then you give them the lie. Like a fake stage manager spoils a lot of good factory hands that he wants to bleed

for a course in some punk school of acting. That's where I blame you. They'll beg, of course they'll beg, but you see that they keep it up. And you know it's going to end bad. You ought to let the fellows with skirts alone. Take the ones that don't have any one but themselves to feel bad when the finish comes. There's enough unmortgaged bums traveling around rescue missions without you making more. These two would have had a home and a wife to look after them if you hadn't butted in. Mr. Bill Kennedy, you ain't got the license to interfere like that—know it? You don't want the responsibility of supporting a fireside yourself, but you ought to be square enough to keep shy of breaking up the other fellow's. And that's just what you are doing to me—and Lizzie."

Kennedy was silent. He glanced at the shrinking figure beside him, but Lizzie offered no further reproach. Addie caught the glance.

"What I say goes for her," she reminded him bitterly.

Kennedy gave an uneasy twitch of the shoulders.

"I'm not in the habit of deliberately breaking hearts," he said, a seriousness creeping into his voice. "It is true that I've taken a lot of young fellows and put them into the game. Sometimes they come out with fair luck, too."

"Sometimes," echoed Addie Murphy, "but you never can tell when they go in, can you? No. And you don't care. You've got a lot to answer for. How many young, strong boys have you got a half nelson on and coaxed into the fight game? More than you can count. And for what? To amuse the cowards, the lazy cowards that crowd near the ring-side, and yell 'Murder him!' whenever they see one or the other of the victims is getting a little polite. You ruin them boys." The color died out of her face, and she stepped close to him as she added: "You ruin them body and soul, you make drunkards, and gamblers, and cheats out of them. You teach them to lie, and deceive, and loaf away their life. What have they got when old age shakes hands? Did you ever stop to

think of that? Or of the homes that might have been? If you didn't want that road yourself you ought to stop being a barricade for the simple-minded giant clowns that don't know enough to push you out of their way. Oh, it's the same with a boy as with a girl! You can flatter them into anything. With a girl it's a few compliments about her hair and her eyes, and a lot of silly trinkets. She's yours. And with a boy it's the telling him he's misunderstood and not appreciated by the home folks, that his job isn't good enough for him, and a little wine to lap up, and a pocket full of big cigars. He's yours!"

Tears rolled down her cheeks. She turned away with a hopeless little gesture of despair. The eternal feminine helplessness at the critical moment asserted itself. And the big, wet drops on the rounded cheeks were the strongest weapons she could have shown the man before her.

A sudden, painful wrench shot across Kennedy's mind. A wrench that comes when something pulls a man's memory backward and causes him to look into the might-have-been corner. Addie Murphy never knew what the sporting promoter was thinking of as he stood there switching his slender cane across the tips of his highly polished shoes. It may have been the picture of a dead love or a neglected love or a rejected one. It may have been one of half a dozen tragic situations which can change a man's entire future. Which one Addie Murphy never knew—or cared. She only heard Bill Kennedy's voice talking to her in a deep, earnest tone.

He was saying:

"Once in a while, Miss Murphy, and—er—Miss Schmidt, it takes a woman to break into the ring. I have always said our sport flourished because the commission laws prohibited female spectators. To be brutally frank with you, as you have with me, may I say that both Waffle McGee and Steiner are almost brainless specimens, with an immense muscular ability. That is the sum total of nearly all champions. You may have noticed that their manager stands beside them on the twenty-four-

hour circuit. Neither of these young men would ever make deep inroads into the fight game, because they have the added conceit which proves a hampering element.

"Men with brains *and* muscle do not make a living knocking down the other fellow. They use the brains to draw a salary with, and the muscle to have decent recreation. Men with brains and no muscle like to watch the brethren with muscle and no brain do their cut-up act. There's always a good showing of weaklings in the house. To keep on being brutally frank: Your friend and your young lady's friend have an even chance at being carted out of the ring badly hurt or merely knocked out. They're not trained. They haven't any sense. They're too pleased with themselves. If they come out with a broken finger or a bent nose they'll be lucky. It isn't the average sort of girl who beards a promoter in his den and tells him the truth as you have. Again, may I say you are far too good for Waffle McGee—that is why he is getting you."

The promoter made a courtly little bow.

"You'll tell them——" breathed Addie Murphy, clutching Lizzie Schmidt by the arm excitedly.

"I'll tell them the truth—after the fight," answered Kennedy, with a firm set of the lips that caused Addie Murphy to quail. "I know a little bit about men myself. I know enough to know that neither of these would-be heavyweights will be satisfied until they have a chance in the sawdust and resin. They will never cry quits until they've heard the roar of the crowd. If I did turn them down, some one else would take them up. It might hold off until you had corralled them via the churchyard. But it would be bound to come. It is only fair to you, to me, to them—that we give them this try-out. And I pledge you my word that after the match they'll come home for keeps."

"You will send them back, you surely will?" Addie Murphy clasped his coat sleeve with her one free hand.

Kennedy smiled almost tenderly.

"Kid," he said slowly, "you chase

yourself home, and keep sewing on that white dress. And whatever Waffle tells you, you forget that it might not be so."

Addie Murphy turned in the doorway as Kennedy showed them out. She put her arm around Lizzie Schmidt's plump little waist.

"Say, you're awful good stuff that got wasted," she told him proudly, "and that goes for both of us."

Clumsy, boyish efforts at writing notes and walking industriously up and down before the frame cottage had no visible effect upon the wearer of the pink shawl. In vain Waffle McGee swallowed his wrath as he looked at the stoop where Terry Owen sat in state, talking in low, ardent tones to Addie Murphy, while Mrs. Murphy stood in the background, serenely puffing a short black pipe of peace.

It was only the fact of the gymnasium practice, the glorious exuberance of the coming match, that kept him from taking to drink after the fashion of one of his uncles. The sweet, singing knowledge of revenge told him to keep braced. When Addie Murphy should read the headlines on the sporting page—he would send her a marked copy—describing his wonderful exhibition of strength and skill, when she should see his picture on the lithograph posters—a tall, noble, reliant figure—then would she look with scorn at the narrow-chested, slant-eyed Terry Owen, and pray she might be taken back into favor.

The night of the match Waffle had a weakening, sickening desire to slip down to the frame cottage, and make an undignified, unmanly appeal. But through mysterious sources of information he learned that Terry Owen was to escort Addie Murphy to a vaudeville theater that same evening. In some unfathomable way he was kept informed as to all Terry Owen's recreations. He began to think of Lizzie Schmidt, the unimportant little German whom Steiner had pushed aside. He wondered if she would live long after she went into the convent. The convent! There was a woman's devotion, a noble ending to a thwarted love. But such love Addie

Murphy never possessed. To turn lightly and assume interest in a hitherto despised lover. Faithless, shallow! Waffle felt a pang of deep suffering. This was the price of a career. Born of suffering, fostered by tragedy.

His married sister, with whom he boarded, gave vent to a few caustic comments about the evening's event. Waffle growled a reply. She asked what she was to do about the installment man for the plush furniture. Waffle had paid one month's money on it. Another pang of suffering struck in. He felt a lump in his throat, a jealous, furry, angry lump, causing his head to ache and his eyes to dance.

"Yez can send him to Terry Owen," he snarled, as he went out the door.

All the way to the hall he kept a futile eye open for a certain slender girl, hoping she might be lingering outside to wish him well before he embraced fame and victory. Perhaps the story about the vaudeville theater might be unfounded. But only strange, careless pedestrians jostled against him. Waffle dug his nails into his strong palms. He would vent his wrath on Steiner. Of course, Steiner was suffering no such tortures. Lizzie had acted sensibly in the matter. Trust the Germans!

Outside the arsenal, where the events were held, there lingered two girls, one slender, one plump, one with a pink shawl over her head, the other with a ridiculous little felt sailor on her tight curls. Both tiptoed back and forth carefully, fearful lest some one recognize them. By and by they heard a faint boom inside the hall.

"That's the signal gun," said Addie Murphy. "Lizzie, dear, ain't girls the fools? But I hope Steiner don't break his nose. You don't think he'll land on that, do you?"

Lizzie shook her head dully. She was waiting for Steiner with the same stoic patience that her mother and her grandmother before her had waited for their men. Addie had promised her it would be all right. And she would wait. Waiting was the woman's part in the game.

"There's all kind of stuff besides our

two," whispered Addie Murphy, as they paced back and forth. "It'll be hours before we—know."

Roars of applause, laughter, a composite cry of horror, reached their ears. The girls gripped each other in helpless alarm.

"Maybe that was—him," breathed Addie Murphy brokenly.

"Maybe—Steiner," said Lizzie Schmidt solemnly.

Then the crowd laughed. They walked up and down, trying to dull their ears to the sounds that came from the hall. Once they stopped in the little confectionery shop on the corner, and sat sipping muddy chocolate and crunching stale wafers. Then they tramped along the deserted street, pausing to listen to the roar of voices from within, wondering if Waffle or Steiner was the cause of applause or sympathy.

Under the flaring street light Lizzie Schmidt caught sight of Addie Murphy's face. It was white and shiny, as if she had been ill for a long time. The German girl patted it softly with her plump fingers.

"Ach, but we have suffered for no-goods," she said sagely. "You are tired, *liebe!*"

But Addie Murphy only shook her head, and tramped ahead.

Inside the arsenal the crowd leaned back to laugh, long and lingeringly. As a preliminary event it was a rare treat to see two able men rise up and flay each other without rhyme or reason, to see them knock down, and pummel, and punch, and crush each other, goaded by a sense of approaching defeat. The crowd shook with glee, the mass of the fighters' friends led wild cheers, whether of mockery or support one could not determine.

Kennedy, standing close beside the ringside, telling a sporting editor the fine points of a coming event, looked up to see the Mysterious Waffle lying bleeding and senseless on the mat, while Steiner the Sausage Bender crawled away, nursing a broken hand. A film passed over Kennedy's eyes—eyes that rarely had time for anything save sights of the earth earthly. He visualized a

slip of a Killarney rose girl with a pink shawl over her head, standing before him accusingly, and telling him that Lizzie Schmidt was going to take the veil, and that she was going to marry Terry Owen, whom she hated.

He rubbed his head confusedly. They had taken the Mysterious Waffle into the dressing room, and the roar of conversation drove away coherent thought. Kennedy darted into the dressing room, pushing back the green baize doors. He stopped to give a sympathetic pat to Steiner, asking if the smash was bad. Then he reached Waffle's cot.

His magnificent physique, which he had so insulted, jacked up his waning consciousness, and he looked at Kennedy with semireproachful, semichildish eyes. His lower jaw drooped in shame, his lip quivered.

"Waffle," asked Kennedy softly, "have you had enough?"

"What d'ye mean?" said Waffle doggedly.

"You go back to that little kid of yours, and tell her you're going to be good," advised Kennedy. "Listen, boy; you wouldn't make get-away money in this game. Neither would Steiner. It's a pretty rough road. Don't be a kinker. Get out of it. I gave you a show—you saw."

A thrill of pain caused Waffle to nod submissively. Steiner, choking back unmanly sobs, turned from the doctor who was dressing the hand.

"You gave us what we asked for—a swatfest?" he grunted.

"You've named it. Go back to your girls, both of you," continued Kennedy. "Say, you've got a peach of a skirt, Waffle McGee. Know it?"

Waffle stared at him, a new jealous suspicion dawning in his weary mind.

"How——"

"She came to see me," explained Kennedy lightly. "I told her you were bound for the ringside sure. I offered her a good lump sum if she and her friend Lizzie would train for lightweight wrestlers. There's a woman's athletic club in Jersey that would place them in a second——"

Waffle started up, forgetful of the Dutcher's thumping.

"Her—in the ring!" he gasped.

"Lizzie—in short clothes—mit gloves—and——"

Steiner writhed, not only from the tight bandage. Outside came the roar of the fickle crowd, welcoming the newcomers, forgetful of the clown novices who had tumbled away to their hearts' content.

Kennedy nodded.

"Those girls would make money," he affirmed. "I'd back them any day."

"What did she say?" groaned Waffle, trying to subside.

"It depends on you—somewhat. Why not the ring for her? It's a fair break. She said—she intimated that she might not be averse to following the game if you were in it. She might be induced to forego the career if you——"

Steiner stiffened angrily.

"Lizzie," he roared, "Lizzie has more sense. She would not come into such a thing——"

"What went for Addie went for Lizzie," glibly retorted the promoter.

Steiner left the arsenal, a defeated, strangely chastened victim. His hand in a sling throbbed with a willfully reminding pain of his folly. But Steiner still held his job in the iron foundry. *He* had not resigned.

Outside he was greeted by two hysterical girls. He pointed significantly inside in answer to Addie Murphy's cry of apprehension at his being alone. Then he looked at Lizzie Schmidt, whose felt sailor had wilted under the evening dews, and whose round face was wet with many tear marks. He tucked her under his well arm, after the fashion of his kind, growled something about "my girl," and marched off into the night. Lizzie gave a wistful glance behind, hoping she might see Waffle gathering Addie close to him. But she could not stop to question. Hers was to trudge along, obedient, contented.

Addie Murphy tore past the irate doorkeeper into the dressing room. She met Kennedy face to face as she was pushing back the green baize door.

"It's all right," he told her. "He's

some lame. Go in and make him whine for your smile."

Every bit of the maternal in her was roused as she fled to the cot where the Mysterious Waffle lay. Ignoring the others, she flung herself down beside him.

Waffle looked at her with mingled suspicion and joy.

"Addie Murphy," he demanded slowly, "are you going to be a lady wrestler? Answer me that while I'm helpless and wounded."

Addie hesitated. She remembered Kennedy's advice. She withdrew her affectionate arm.

"Tin ears and flattened beaks," she murmured. "Waffle, so the Dutcher laid you low."

"Are you going to?" repeated Waffle angrily.

"Steiner took Lizzie and jerked her along. She hadn't time to ask what happened."

"Are you going to—Addie, dear—and the banns was going to be read next month; the furniture man was the first caller at the house this morning. Addie, tell me, are you going to?"

A tantalizing smile crept in to replace the unshed tears in her dark-blue eyes.

"Are you going to?" she asked shyly.

"Never!" Waffle threw down the barrier. "I'm going to do just what you want, just what you think I ought to do. Kennedy's a cheat; he doesn't give a damn for either of us; he wanted to get the clubs to come into his money box. Addie, my back feels like a thousand pokers had been broken across it. Addie, are you going to?"

"Now you know the feeling," she reminded coyly.

One big, unruly tear forced itself down the boy's cheek. Addie flung her arms impetuously around him. She could not bear to see the clay feet crumble.

"I'm going to marry you—that's all," she whispered.

A year later Kennedy, coming in from the east part of the city after search of fresh prey for amateur events, looked at the man sitting next him on the car.

He had a familiar appearance. To be sure, he wore a black flannel shirt, and carried a dinner pail—a worn, dulled pail bespeaking many sessions. His soft hat was shabby but well brushed—a woman's hand did that—and the coat was neatly patched. Kennedy hesitated before speaking. He remembered the same individual as wearing smart, gray clothes with a dashing stripe, of having the trousers creased à la razor blades, and boasting of the latest cut hat. The promoter bent forward. On the lapel of the worn serge coat was a photo button, tinted with impossible colors. It was the picture of a smiling, happy girl who was cuddling a laughing baby.

Kennedy was sure of his ground.

"Hullo, Waffle," he said easily. "And how's Mrs. Waffle and the little Pancake?"

Waffle looked up. He held out a big, hard-fisted hand cordially, and grinned. Kennedy saw the contented, sane look of a muchly married man, a bit in the rut, to be sure, but a good rut—a right rut.

"Fine!" he said. "Come and see us."

"You bet you!"

"That eight-day clock is the best thing in our parlor," blurted Waffle. "Addie says she'd rather give up anything else but that."

"Glad you liked it," assured Kennedy. "So you're in the grind?"

A dull flush came into his cheeks. His restricted life gave him a petty sense of shame, a faint echo of his previous, youthful outburst against what had been best for him.

"So's Steiner," he added. "He's got twins."

Then his big hand wandered up to feel the photo button. Bill Kennedy felt a lonesome pang as he watched the boy's expression change.

"And I suppose you're going home to the best supper, and the best girl, and the best baby in the world," he said, as he rose to leave the car. "Are you still at the stockyards?"

Waffle nodded. "Coaxed my old job back," he said soberly.

"What's that?"

"Countin' hogs!"



A HIT in the NINTH

by Edward Boltwood

Author of "The Umbrella," "The Quality of Brotherhood," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. C. CASWELL

SO this gray head of mine is fated for the ax. Is that the idea?" demanded Worthilake.

"Oh, rats!" said young Mr. Dannie Lerba. "I ain't the sort of guy to fire a man out of a job he's had for thirty years, unless I can name a reason. You could keep on selling tickets here, pop, but you've got to quit knocking my new show all over the ward, like you're doing now, before it opens."

"My artistic opinions are my own," said Worthilake.

"Rats!" repeated Dannie, and he swung irritably in his managerial swivel chair.

Over the chair a lithograph of Edwin Booth, in the character of *Richelieu*, was tacked on the wall of the shabby box office. Old Worthilake eyed the portrait morosely. He remembered the time he had placed it there, on the day he entered the service of the Greenwich Avenue Theater. Mr. Booth, to be sure, had never acted at the Greenwich Avenue, a humble temple of the drama on the lower West Side of New York. But the lithograph stood for an ideal to Worthilake. In Pittsburgh he had once, at the high tide of his professional career, performed the *Wounded Officer* to the great tragedian's *Macbeth*.

Worthilake turned and looked out of the office door into the lobby. Men were at work there on the frame of the

new electric sign, which read: "Lerba's Photo Palace Playhouse." The new manager creaked his swivel chair again, and rapped on a blotting pad.

"Come back to earth, pop," said he. "You've got to quit preaching against moving pictures before I give you a job. Why, a saloon keeper might as well put a temperance crank behind his bar! And the folks around here listen to you, too—that's the worst of it."

"Moving pictures!" intoned the veteran, with magnificent scorn. "I have seen the palmy days, sir; this hand has grasped the hand of Thomas W. Keene. Moving pictures! I would not stoop to be connected with them."

"You've stooped to running nickel vaudeville here," Lerba said.

"It was at least drama, sir," retorted Worthilake, "and not a peep show."

"Huh-h!" grunted Dannie. "Well, what in—what do you expect to do for a living?"

"I have my art, Mr. Lerba. I shall return to the stage."

Dannie leaned back and roared with laughter.

"Not to my stage, you won't!" he gurgled, when he caught his breath. "Mind this, pop!" And his fat face suddenly grew angry. "Don't let me see hide nor hair of you around the photo palace after this morning! I'm through with you, for good. You're only hurting my business, and I propose to cut you out—understand?"

Worthilake nodded, crossed the narrow office, and in silence removed the lithograph. With a grim tenderness, he



"I'm through with you, for good."

rolled up the cardboard, while young Lerba drummed on his desk reflectively.

Dannie was not a bad sort of fellow, but he considered himself a theatrical magnate, and the old man's daily patronizing air had offended him greatly for a fortnight.

"Going back to the stage, hey?" said he. "Well, now, pop, ain't that something like a has-been fossil of a baseball player, limping up from the bench to try to bat out a hit in the ninth inning? Still, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll just give you the address of a friend of mine that has got just the place for you."

He wrote down the name of the cousin who was the superintendent of a certain woodyard, maintained by a charitable society for the purpose of sup-

plying food and lodging to poor men in return for work with the saw.

"There's the number," chuckled Dannie. "You go to that manager, pop, in case Dave Belasco and the others happen to turn you down."

In his bedroom, over the lobby, Pop Worthilake packed a decrepit trunk with his few belongings. A tin box at the bottom contained such treasures as a glove worn by Clara Morris as *Miss Multon*, a sandal thong of John McCullough's, a brass button from Lester Wallack's *Rosedale* uniform.

He locked the trunk, and descended the stairs, and walked slowly toward Sixth Avenue. The quiet, semiresidential district, in which the little theater stood, was a kind of placid backwater

of the city's mighty surge. Worthilake's tall, slim figure was almost as familiar to the ward as was the Jefferson Market tower. Many men nodded to him; children occasionally caught the waving skirts of his rusty coat; matrons saluted him so often that his antiquated high hat was seldom on his head longer than half a minute at a time.

In the region of Broadway, however, Worthilake strode along unnoticed, except by the irreverent. Above Madison Square his costume was a joke, and his absurdly tragic face made people think of caricatures of stage life in comic weeklies. But the frequent

smiles of the street crowd did not bother him. His mind was feverishly concerned elsewhere. Worthilake's nostrils quivered, his eyes gleamed, his lean chin was pointed upward; and at every glittering theater entrance the nostrils seemed to widen, and the eyes to gain luster, and the chin to assume an angle still more ambitious.

If his figure was a joke on the street, it was a howling farce in the theatrical employment agencies. Old Worthilake was as much of a stranger there as he would have been on the floor of the Paris bourse. The busy whirl of the agencies utterly dazed him. He blinked

with consternation at the brisk, well-dressed young men who dismissed him before he could explain that he had once supported Oliver Doud Byron in "Across the Continent." He was paralyzed by amazement, rather than injured, when precocious office boys mimicked him, to the admiration of giggling stenographers. From office to office, and from stage door to stage door, he wandered, as if in a dream.

Worthilake's dreaminess was not cleared away by his solitary luncheon, of which he partook in an obscure chophouse on a side street. The ale was potent there, and Worthilake, to tell all the truth, ordered an extra toby, which he did not need. He sipped the ale, and regarded a framed collection of ancient theatrical programs with the devout eyes of a stage-struck girl; and it was at this moment that he thought of Lerba's card.

Lerba had written on the card only a name,



Worthilake, in a flaming fury of indignation, dashed forward.

"Moses Shafelstein," and a street number, which was not far from that of the chophouse.

He left the restaurant with his head high and with a smile of joyous purpose on his face; but in front of a billboard on the next corner he halted, and the smile vanished. Worthilake scowled terribly, and shook his Malacca cane at the billboard. It bore the advertisement of a moving-picture show.

"My curses on ye!" he hissed, and resumed his march, somewhat unsteadily, to Mr. Shafelstein's.

But at another corner he halted again, and this time with reasonable cause.

The street ahead of him was bare of traffic, and the curb was lined by a score of interested masculine spectators. They were interested by a fight which raged on the asphalt pavement. One of the two gladiators was a man, and the other was a woman. She was large, and burly, and armed with a mop, but the little man appeared to be giving her the worst of it. When he tripped the woman and adroitly sat down on her broad chest, the crowd applauded, and several of them seemed even to be urging further hostilities on his part.

Worthilake, in a flaming fury of indignation, dashed forward.

"Shame!" he cried.

"Hey!" blurted the cool-voiced man. "Stand off, can't you?"

But Worthilake was not to be denied. His chivalrous, if slightly alcoholic, wrath at the woman's plight prevented him from hearing the cool-voiced man's hurried protests; nor did he notice an-



Worthilake, with his own eyes, saw himself acting a leading part under the precise center of the proscenium arch.

other wildly protesting individual, who was turning the crank of a small, black box, set on a tripod, near by.

"Shame!" thundered Worthilake, charging toward the gladiators.

The perplexed operator of the crank stopped turning it, but a cool-voiced person waved his arm urgently.

"Keep her a-going," he directed. "This'll be some reel. The old geezer's got bats. He ain't on to nothin'."

Worthilake, indeed, was unconscious of everything except that at last he held the center of a stage. He flung his hat and cane to the pavement, and assumed a wonderful attitude, glaring at the tumultuous audience. It seemed to him

that he was behind the footlights; he could smell gas, and orange peel, and the paint of scenery. The lines of his part occurred to him instantly, and he delivered them in the tremendous tone of an Edwin Forrest:

"The man that lays his hand upon a woman, Save in the way of kindness, is a wretch, Whom 'twere gross flattery to name a coward."

"So, release her, caitiff!" added Worthilake, and grappled violently with him who sat upon the woman's chest.

"Taint a her, at all, you old fool!" gasped the man. "It's Pat Doyle, me sketch pardner. Lemme up!"

"Look out! The horses!" bawled the crowd, as an imitation police-patrol wagon clattered up the street.

Worthilake, bewildered and oblivious, fell beneath the wheels, and the wagon at once ceased to be an imitation, and performed the real service of carting him to a hospital.

The Photo Palace Playhouse was crammed on the opening night; but the spectators were stolid and silent, and in the box office Dannie Lerba exchanged nervous surmises with a representative of the picture-film manufacturers.

"Those new reels are all right, aren't they?" grumbled Lerba.

"Sure they are," said Mr. McKay. "'Specially one of 'em. It's got a street fight in it, and—hullo!"

Dannie glanced at the ticket window. He saw a long, cadaverous face, crowned by a battered silk hat.

"Well, pop!" said Lerba good-humoredly. "Couldn't stay away, hey? Pass in. All courtesies to the profession."

"I prefer to pay, sir," declared Worthilake, shoving ten cents across the glass before he disappeared.

"Who's that gink?" inquired McKay.

"An old lobster that worked here," Lerba said. "He's no use to me, so I fired him out, and told him to stay out, too. But I guess having him here one night won't hurt."

"He looks familiar, kind of," ruminated the agent of the film makers.

Worthilake leaned on the rail at the rear of the parquet. Delighted at the apathy of the audience, he turned his

back on the stage and expressed his satisfaction to a friendly policeman.

Suddenly there was a riotous burst of applause from the crowded house. Pop Worthilake wheeled around and stared at the pictures on the screen.

His temples throbbed, his flesh tingled, his veins seemed to run fire. He clutched the pillar to escape a fall; then a magic strength, as of youth, filled his being, and he drew himself up proudly. For, after a lifetime of theatrical obscurity, Worthilake, with his own eyes, saw himself acting a leading part under the precise center of the proscenium arch.

A woman in the stage box screamed his name, the boys in the gallery shouted it, the entire house rang with it. In the lobby, McKay slapped Lerba exultantly on the shoulder.

"Listen to that racket!" said he. "The ice is busted now, and they'll stay woke up. Listen!"

But the yells to which Dannie listened made him furious.

"Worthilake!" "Pop Worthilake!"

"Tree cheers for pop!"

"The old tramp!" snarled Lerba hotly. "What's he up to, in there? I'll show him, the old lunatic!" And Dannie, muttering oaths, flew into the auditorium, McKay at his heels.

Straight and majestic stood Pop Worthilake, with his head high among the ambrosial clouds of gratified ambition. McKay pushed Lerba aside, and grasped Worthilake's hand.

"Here, I recognize you now!" exclaimed McKay. "How's this for luck? That fool we sent to the hospital lost track of you, Mr. What's-your-name. There's a steady job waiting for you at our studio. You're the biggest hit we've had this season—that reel you helped with is. We are going to star you in a series. What do you say?"

"Agreed, sir," assented Worthilake royally.

"Why, you've always cursed out moving pictures, you old faker!" sputtered Dannie.

"Peace!" commanded Worthilake, raising an imperial finger toward the stage. "I am taking an encore."

THE GENEROUS STRAIN

BY
HULBERT FOOTNER

Author of "Concetta and the El Guard," "Two on the Trail," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. A. FURMAN

ASHER FOLSOM came into Nina's shadowy drawing-room, kissed the cool lips of its mistress, and sank into a chair with a sigh.

"Nina, this is like heaven!" he said. "After the racket and the dirt and the angry passions outside, like heaven!"

"Isn't a good deal of the angry passion your own, Asher?" she asked, with a slow smile. The charm of Nina was most evident in her smile.

"Oh, I know," he said, with a groan. "Their senseless opposition makes my blood boil. Let's not talk of it. I received a deputation of their women to-day. Ugh! I need you as an antidote. This is heaven, and you are the angel of the place!"

"Of the very same clay as these others, Asher," she said, smiling.

"Nonsense!" he said. "Your moving and speaking cast a spell over me, Nina—of restfulness."

"Only they have to work so hard, and I have always been taken care of," she went on.

"That's as it should be," he said shortly. "Our men can work for both."

"Yet their men do not spare themselves, either," she said softly.

He laughed lightly.

"This is rank socialism! Let me have some tea, dear."

She lighted the spirit lamp. The match flaring up showed tense lines in her usually serene face. Her hand

trembled a little, but her eyes were steady.

Asher did not perceive anything changed in her.

"What have you been doing to-day?" he asked lightly.

She disregarded the question.

"The men have given in, haven't they, Asher?" she asked.

"Who told you that?" he sharply demanded.

"Oh, one hears!" she said evasively.

"Well, I've not given in yet," he muttered.

If he had looked at her he could not have helped but see how she paled, but his head was sulkily averted. She was silent for a while, searching in her mind for words that would not anger him too much.

At length she said very low: "Asher, is this fair play?"

A slow, angry red overspread his face.

"Nina, what has happened?" he demanded. "Something has changed you! Is it possible they have tried to get at me through you, the cowards!"

She got up, because, sitting, she could not control her trembling.

"I am changed," she murmured. "I have been the coward. All through this terrible time I have shut my eyes and refused to think of it. I do so love peace, and quiet pleasures, and kind feelings! It made a coward of me—but my eyes are opened now!"

"I was satisfied with you," he muttered.

"I can never go back," she said.

"Who's been here?" he demanded. "It won't do them any good!"

"One of the wives," said Nina. "I shan't tell you who. And I have been in some of the homes."

"Without telling me!" he exclaimed.

She was silent.

"Did they threaten you—or me?" he demanded.

She smiled a little.

"I am not that kind of a coward, Asher," she said.

"They sniveled, then," he said contemptuously.

"They told me that the men had offered to return to work at your own terms, and that you had then refused to start up the plant for six weeks to come. But I could not believe it."

"It is true," he said defiantly.

Her eyes widened with a kind of horror.

"Asher, how do you justify such a course?" she asked.

He sprang up.

"I don't have to justify it to them," he cried angrily. "I am the head of this business, and I shall run it to the best advantage. When I needed them they wouldn't work; now they can wait until I need them again!"

"But what reason?"

"There are a dozen reasons. Orders have been canceled; I am rebuilding the furnaces, and making other changes. The company will do better on the year by starting December first than by starting now."

"But, Asher, they will starve in the meantime," she urged.

"That's not my lookout," he said coolly. "It was they who closed down the plant in the first place."

She made no answer to this, but stood looking at him as if she saw a horrible changeling in his place.



"Say what you like!" he cried. "It is intimidation, and it won't go!"

He strode the length of the room, and came back to her.

"I didn't expect this from you, Nina," he said bitterly. "At the first whimper that reaches you from the other side you forget all I've been through! If it hadn't been for them you and I would have been married before this. You know how I have been hounded, vilely abused, brought to the brink of ruin!"

He impatiently pulled back a curtain at the window.

"Look! Here's the whole story. Those men skulking across the street; they report my movements to the strike headquarters. And Stollen, my secretary, in the motor there—I can't get a chauffeur to drive me, the risk is too great! The lad is shaking in his shoes, but he doesn't desert me under fire!"

"Neither do I, under fire," she said quickly. "They offer to lay down their arms."

"Let them go down on their marrow-bones a while; it'll do them good," he said coolly. "I have been through too much to be forgiving all at once."

"But, Asher, it is the helpless non-combatants who suffer the most," she pleaded. "I have seen them to-day; the women enduring stoically, and the children, oh! the hungry children, Asher! Some of them too little to ask for food, just looking wistfully in their mothers' faces. It is the sight of these things at home that brings the men to their knees, Asher. And will you still hold out?"

"You shouldn't have gone, Nina," he said uncomfortably. "In business we cannot allow ourselves to be swayed by our feelings. The works resume on December first. A notice to that effect will be posted on the gates to-night."

"Asher, wait a day," she begged. "You are angry now. To-morrow things may look differently."

He set his jaw.

"I don't change so easily," he said. "If I'm wrong, I accept the consequences."

They turned away from each other.

Asher, thrusting his hands in his pockets, stared gloomily out of the window. Nina turned a ring on her fin-

ger. Finally, with a catch in her breath, she slipped it off.

Asher turned.

"Nina," he said in a gentler voice, "our afternoon is almost spoiled. Must we be disputing about business, dear?"

The unexpected gentleness unnerved her. She shrank, and her lip trembled piteously—but she did not withdraw the extended hand, in which lay his ring.

"Asher, we—we must say good-by," she whispered.

He started when he saw the ring, and his eyes sought hers in wide astonishment, succeeded by the hurt and softened look that she alone knew there.

"Nina!" he murmured.

Her hand trembled so that the ring dropped to the rug. She resolutely turned her back. His handsome face hardened again, and his lip curled.

"So!" he said harshly. "Here's a new kind of intimidation! You ought to know me better, Nina!"

A painful blush overspread her neck and face, only to fade quickly.

"I do not wish to interfere in your business," she said hurriedly. "I told the women that. But I have to think of myself. I seem to see you for the first time. I will not marry an unjust and a revengeful man!"

"Say what you like!" he cried. "It is intimidation, and it won't go!"

"Take the ring," she said faintly.

The cords of his neck and forehead stood out. He made a step forward, and ground the ring into the rug under his heel.

"Oh, damn the ring!" he muttered.

"Please go," she murmured.

He seized her roughly in his arms.

"I won't give you up!" he cried. "Not while I have breath! What's a ring! I'll buy you a handsomer one. I love you, do you hear? And you love me! You're mine, you're mine, and I'll never give you up!"

She lay inert in his arms, without attempting to resist. In spite of himself, her white face awed him, and his arms relaxed. She slipped away.

"I can't prevent your touching me," she said proudly. "But it doesn't signify. You have something to learn



The front wheels sank, the radiator struck the solid boards, and the car somersaulted.

about me, too. I told you I was a coward, but you must not count too much on that. Because this is something stronger than I, and it will never let me give in."

Upon leaving Nina, Asher motored to the works at a rate of speed that caused Stollen, his secretary, to turn pale. The men idling in the village of Folsom, and along the river bank, scowled after them as they roared past. Asher himself tacked the notice of the deferred resumption of the works on the entrance gate.

The plant was built on an island of partly filled land in the Ohio River. A kind of bog, which was overflowed at high water, lay between it and the shore. Over the bog was built a wooden bridge, which constituted the main approach to the works. Those of the men who crossed to read the notice murmured openly. Their employer looked

them over with a grim defiance. In his present mood he welcomed a fight.

"They'll be ripe for trouble by night," he said carelessly to Stollen. "Are you game to ride back with me after dinner, and sleep in the office?"

The boyish secretary nodded. Asher's speech was overheard, and passed among the men.

By the time the automobile reissued from the gate, the news had been carried to the village, and a threatening crowd was gathering at the shore end of the bridge. Asher, with a sneer, drove the car through, compelling the men to fall back. The murmuring gave place to loud, hoarse cries, and a stone was thrown. It fell harmlessly in the back of the tonneau.

"We'll get you when you come back," one cried.

"Remember as many faces as you can, Stollen," said Asher coolly. "It will be useful later."

The arrangements for guarding the works at night were well known to the strikers. Two armed men held the office, two watched at the railway gate, while four others patrolled inside the fence and along the river front of the property. The day force of guards slept in the engine room, within call. As an additional precaution, an alarm had been laid from the shore end of the bridge, so that if a body of men set foot on it a bell would ring in the office.

On the mainland there was an unoccupied piece of land opposite the works, which had been used from time immemorial as a ball ground by the employees. At dusk a crowd marched down to this spot, with torches and a drum, to hold a meeting. From the open windows of the office the guards looked across indifferently; they were well used to it. But on this night the racket of cries and drumming was more persistent; so persistent that it prevented another sound from reaching the ears of the guards, the cautious swish-swish of a saw at work under the middle of the bridge.

Meanwhile, Asher took Stollen to dinner at his club, and afterward, with a great parade of joviality, carried a party of men to the theater. He kept in communication by telephone with his men at the works.

It was after midnight when Asher and Stollen returned to Folsom in the motor. The village was wholly dark and quiet. Asher, on the alert, drove through at a good speed, but with his engine under strict control. Turning into the bridge, the searchlights illumined it clear and unobstructed to the gate. Asher opened up his machine, and they sped across. Halfway there was a ripping sound beneath them, the front wheels sank, the radiator struck the solid boards, and the car somersaulted, and crashed upside down on the bridge beyond the cut.

The crash brought the guards on the run. They found Stollen thrown clear of the wreck, and practically uninjured. Asher was pinned underneath. When they succeeded in lifting the machine, they saw that there was life remaining

in the crushed body on the boards. He showed no wound, but in the lantern light his face had the distorted look of those desperately hurt within.

Asher was hurried to the little hospital on the heights above Sequanneck. As soon as surgeons could be procured, he was operated on, but precious time had been lost. He bled internally, and, at first, no hope was held out. At sunrise they succeeded in stanching it, and he rallied slightly. A partly encouraging bulletin was issued.

This was the news that awaited Nina Bellhouse when she came downstairs. She arrived at the hospital pale, but to other appearances her ordinary, quiet self. He had already asked for her, they said. She was to be allowed to see him. Everything depended on his being kept quiet.

Nina had schooled herself for the sight; nevertheless it was terrible to her to see Asher, the embodiment of vigor and decision, lying so quiet, his ruddy face blanched to the whiteness of the pillow it lay against. It was only twelve hours since he had left her in a towering passion.

He opened his eyes at the approach of her step, and ever so faintly smiled. One hand lay outside the covers; she pressed it. He tilted his chin up a little, like a child, and she bent and kissed him. He sighed, and, clinging feebly to her hand, closed his eyes again. Presently the nurse told Nina that he had fallen asleep.

Throughout the day he held his own, and next morning was appreciably stronger. A touch of his old imperiousness returned, and he frowned as he lay with his eyes closed. Nina, with a sinking heart, wondered of what he was thinking. He had not yet referred to the accident, except to ask about Stollen. In the course of the morning he expressed a wish to see his secretary. The boy had scarcely left the waiting room of the hospital since Asher had been carried in.

Asher smiled grimly at Stollen's scared expression.

"Cheer up, old man," he said. "They haven't got us yet!"

The boy's eyes filled.

"What's been done?" Asher asked abruptly.

"The police are working," stammered Stollen.

Asher made an impatient movement.

"Hire the three highest-priced detectives in Pittsburgh," he said in his old way. "Offer a thousand dollars reward; that will bring the jackals out of their holes. We'll make 'em smart now. Instruct Corey, the storekeeper, to secure judgments against all the strikers who owe, and tell Wolrige he is to start the evictions on Monday."

Nina's hands went to her breast to still her uncontrollable start.

"Asher, Asher!" she whispered quickly. "They're not all guilty! Think of the women and children!"

With an invalid's perversity, he affected not to hear her.

"That's all, Stollen," he said. "Report to me to-morrow."

He was exhausted by his effort, and for a long time after Stollen left the room he lay quiet, with closed eyes. Nina, too, was silent. She could not contend with a man desperately sick. She sat by the bed, holding his hand, her face expressing her painful thoughts.

At length his hand stirred within hers, and he spoke again.

"I suppose I'm waiting now for poison to develop."

She started to learn that he understood his own case so well.

"You'll surely get better," she said quickly. "You have a wonderful constitution."

"I guess the chances are even," he said coolly. "There's something I want to make sure of, Nina."

She glanced at him with eyes full of painful premonition.

"What is it, dear?"

"Marry me, Nina. Here, to-day."

It was some seconds before she could trust herself to speak. Her eyes showed blank panic in the face of the hideous situation that confronted her.

"Hush!" she said tremblingly. "You must be quiet, Asher."

"That would quiet me," he muttered. "I want you to get what I have."

"I don't want your possessions, dear," she murmured. "I only want you to get well."

"Then marry me, Nina."

His restless movements made the danger of continuing to oppose his will frightfully clear to her. She attempted to exert the authority of the well.

"If you do not stay quiet, they will send me away, Asher," she said.

"Then I'll die to spite them," he muttered sullenly.

"Wait till you are a little stronger."

His head rolled impatiently on the pillow.

"No!" he said. "There's something bothering me. Marry me, and I'll be at peace!"

Nina bent over him, softly stroking his cheek. "It's not wanting me that makes you uneasy, dear," she whispered. "It's having been unjust. Send for Mr. Stollen and recall your orders."

"Never!" he muttered. "Let them feel a bit of my pain! If I've got to die, I'll go easier knowing they're going to smart for it."

His weak vehemence appalled her.

"Oh, hush! Hush!" she begged.

She pressed the bell for the nurse.

"You're just putting me off," he went on, fixing his sick, wild eyes on her face. "Even when they've brought me to this, you take their part against me!"

"No! No!" she murmured.

"Then answer me. Will you marry me to-day or to-morrow?"

The intolerable pain escaped from Nina's breast in a low cry.

"Asher, pity me! Pity me!" she murmured. "I love you. If I give in to your worst passions now, I can never oppose you again. And if what is good in each of us dies, where is the gain?"

"That's no answer," he said. "Yes or no, or I'll raise up in bed and start the thing going again."

Nina's head hung low.

"No!" she said very low.

His febrile excitement increased. He succeeded in raising himself a little. The nurse came in.

"Leave the room! I don't need you!" he commanded. "All right!" he went on to Nina. "You have chosen! So have I. I mean to fight them to the end, do you understand? To the end!"

In the act of saying it, a queer, astonished look overspread his face, his voice trailed off, and his head fell back inert. The nurse hurried for a doctor.

Nina was banished from the room. During the hour that followed she sat in the corridor, with her hands in her lap and her eyes fixed on all who passed in and out of Asher's room. More

A spark of light appeared over the edge of the towering cliffs of Nina's abyss of pain.

"Transfusion?" she stammered.

"Yes," said the great man impatiently. "To live, he must have blood, and quickly."

Nina spread out her hands.

"Why, here am I!" she said in a strong voice.

"You?" he said in surprise.

"I am strong and well," she urged.

"My doctor is here. Ask him. Oh, it must be I."



"Issue the necessary orders to all heads of departments—and post a new notice on the gates."

than once her lips shaped the words: "I have killed the man I love." But the blow in its magnitude mercifully stunned her, and as yet her eyes showed only a piteous astonishment.

A quiet bustle filled the private ward; one by one the doctors arrived; a consultation was held low-voiced in the corridor. The last to arrive was the most famous surgeon from town. When he issued from Asher's room, after making an examination, Nina glided to his side, and laid a hand on his arm.

"Please tell me," she whispered.

"Very little hope," he said laconically. "The one chance lies in an immediate operation for transfusion, but the subject has not arrived."

Asher awoke, and lay watching the nurse move about his room.

"Am I going to get well?" he suddenly asked.

"Sure!" she said heartily. "Haven't you just had four hours' sleep!"

"I can't remember," he said. "Was there another operation?"

"Im-hym," she murmured. "Mustn't talk."

He disregarded the admonition.

"Was it successful?"

"Obviously," she said, "or you wouldn't be asking."

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Hingham," she said curtly.

"What did they do to me this time, Miss Hingham?" he asked.

She pulled up the blind a little, and smoothed his pillow.

"Lie still, like a good man," she urged, "and just think of nothing at all."

Asher frowned.

"I'm not a child," he muttered.

"What did they do to me?"

"Perfectly simple," she said briskly.

"You lost nearly all your own blood, and they got you some more."

"Where?"

She laughed teasingly.

"Where do you suppose? From the laboratory?"

"Some one gave me his blood!" he said in surprise. "Who?"

"If you're not enough to try the temper of a saint!" exclaimed Miss Hingham. "I have orders not to allow you to talk."

"Tell me and I'll be quiet," he said.

She had been told to use her judgment. She weighed the chances with a narrow glance at him, and made up her mind.

"It's nothing sensational in the way of an operation," she said lightly. "Doctor Craigie does one nearly every day. The subject is as fit and well to-day as I am. It was Miss Bellhouse."

He took it quietly.

"Nina," he murmured, and was silent for a long time. "When can I see her?" he asked at length.

"As soon as we can trust you to behave yourself," said Miss Hingham briskly.

"Nurse, may I ask one more question?" he said, very humbly for him.

"Well?"

"Tell me how it's done."

"It's simplicity itself," she answered.

"The subject and the patient are both anesthetized, and laid side by side. An artery is dissected out of the subject's arm, a vein in the patient's. They are sutured together, and the two arms tied—"

"Bound together!" he murmured.

"Then, you see, the well person's heart simply pumps blood into the sick person's body."

"Nina's blood!" he murmured to himself.

"It's a beautiful operation to watch," Miss Hingham went on, with a kindling eye. "The sunken look smooths out of the patient's face, a little color returns, and his tortured breath comes easily again. You can fairly see him snatched back!"

Asher turned his face away from the light, and lay so still she thought he was falling asleep again. She sat down. But his eyes were wide open, fixed and troubled with the slow thoughts of a brain feeling its way back to health. He tried without attracting her attention to feel his own feeble pulse. He clenched and opened his hand as strongly as he was able, looking for some visible evidence of the blood flowing beneath the skin.

After a long time, he asked suddenly:

"Miss Hingham, do you suppose Stollen, my secretary, is within reach?"

"He might be downstairs," she said.

"If I could see him for half a minute, it would ease my mind very much."

"I'll ask the doctor," she said.

Eventually young Stollen, with many injunctions, was admitted.

"Hello!" said Asher. "Still here, you see, Stollen. They won't let me say much. I want you to take a car, and find as many of the directors as you can. Try to arrange a meeting immediately. Tell them I earnestly recommend that the works be started up within a week, if they approve."

"They will," murmured the boy.

"Then issue the necessary orders to all heads of departments—and post a new notice on the gates."

Stollen's face worked painfully. The ghost of his old grim smile flickered around Asher's lips.

"Look at him, nurse! I believe he's going to blubber!"

"You're—you're so good!" faltered the boy.

"Not on your life, Stollen," said Asher, still smiling faintly. "It's not I. I may be said to have passed out. I breathe, I lift my hand, I speak to you only by virtue of a precious essence which has been lent to me. How could I deny the generous strain that is warming my veins so deliciously?"

THE EMANCIPATION OF ANN



BY
**ELIZABETH
NEWPORT
HEPBURN**

Author of "Poor Peggy," "The Medieval Male," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRIET ADAIR NEWCOMB

MY cousin, Ann Haywood, is not a typical Southern beauty, like her sister Portia. She is merely young, and gay, and wholesome, with a straight, strong body, a trifle too slender, and clear, blue-gray eyes, which look at you squarely, and an unusual gift, even among the young women of her own kind, for making, and wearing, simple but curiously charming clothes. She also has a capital of energy and executive ability, from which her family draws large dividends.

When the cook leaves, it is Ann who cooks the family meals, washes the dishes, "does up" the blouses and doilies—whatever they may be—runs up and down stairs to wait on her mother, whom the cook's departure invariably prostrates, buttons Portia up the back, sorts and mends Bob's and her father's laundry, manages the furnace, adds up the weekly bills, makes the beds, and sweeps and dusts the entire house. When the cook is in the kitchen, placed for the time being, it is Ann—with the humane assistance of the sewing machine—who "runs up" her mother's negligees, her own workaday frocks, and Portia's button-up-the-back gowns.

As the peripatetic colored help is mediocre at best, there are many household tasks to which Ann always attends,

although Portia waters the plants, arranges the flowers for festal occasions, and embroiders magnificent center pieces, and, I rather suspect, her own lingerie! Instinctively, the dullest male mind, however antiquated, must recognize that Portia and the interesting word "lingerie" somehow belong together; she has, invariably, an exquisite, embroidered, properly attenuated or properly fluffed appearance, according to the fashion of the day.

It is Ann, of course, who pays those duty calls which do not happen to interest her mother and sister, does the marketing, and attends to the perpetual necessity of paring down expenses. Cousin Constance, I may add, is the literary member of the family, who reads innumerable novels and invariably writes particularly delectable notes of sympathy and condolence to her be-reaved acquaintance.

All these interesting items I discovered by degrees. Being an unintuitive male creature, it has taken me years to realize just how much labor Ann's life entails, despite the interesting myth that no gentlewoman of the Haywood stamp ever by any chance "works for her living." It is perhaps unnecessary to interpolate that before the calamity of 1865 the Haywoods were a mighty clan, and that they still live on in the old

environment, a self-respecting, conservative city a little south of Mason and Dixon's imaginary line.

One day, when I was calling at the house, I found my Cousin Constance wearing a particularly delightful house gown of Ann's design and manufacture. By contrast with its simple elegance, the antiquated and unrenovated furniture of the living room looked peculiarly shabby, and I said to my youngest cousin:

"Ann, do you realize that women earn large incomes by 'creating' frocks like that? Why don't you take up designing and dressmaking, and turn your talent into remunerative channels?"

My Cousin Constance sat up very straight in her chair. Two pink spots flamed suddenly in her delicate, oval cheeks.

"My dear Hal, how absurd!"

Mr. Haywood, gray, lean, dejected-looking, peered at me over his evening paper.

"Thanks, Harrington, but I am quite able to support my family without the assistance of my daughters," he remarked, not without some asperity.

Ann seemed almost more shocked than either of her parents.

"Why, Cousin Harry, if I did that sort of thing, I should not have time to make mother half so pretty!" she cried.

"Or rather Portia so beautiful," said my Cousin Constance, smiling proudly, as Portia, in a fresh evening dress of some sort of mully, illusive material, entered the room. Portia was going with me to the opera.

I may as well confess that at this early stage I, like many other men who came to the house, was rather more thrilled by Portia's beauty than by Ann's character and competence.

But from this time on I began to give Ann's case a great deal of thought. Ann was certainly attractive. Men always liked her, yet she received less pointed attention than Portia. Actually, she was often so driven by a multitude of conflicting occupations during the day that when evening came she was less enthusiastic about going out than Por-

tia, or the pretty married sisters when they came home for a visit. One day I commented on this, rather guardedly, to Cousin Constance, and discovered that Ann's mother had some definite and surprising theories about her youngest daughter.

"Of course, Ann will never marry," she remarked placidly.

"Ann—not marry—in the name of Heaven why?" I demanded.

At this moment Ann, carrying some sewing on her arm, entered the room. She slipped a footstool under her mother's feet, picked up a pair of shears from the library table, smiled at me, and went out by another door.

Cousin Constance settled comfortably back into her chair, now perfectly adjusted by reason of the footstool—which, doubtless, I should have discovered and arranged—and said sweetly:

"You see, Ann cares nothing for men. She is quite absurdly wrapped up in her home life, her little round of daily duties. Leaving her father and me would be like lopping off one of her arms. Moreover, the dear child is temperamentally aloof from matters of sentiment; she is, in fact, a born old maid! And I cannot say that I am sorry, since, to my mind, the life of an unmarried woman has many compensations."

My cousin said this with a little sigh, and, somehow, I found it quite impossible to continue the argument.

In her soft, lavender shawl, with her soft, white hair and soft, faded cheeks, my Cousin Constance made a charming picture as she reclined in an old-fashioned *chaise longue*, which happened to be placed directly under a portrait of another Constance of an elder generation painted by Copley.

Being an artist, and a relative as well, I am allowed the privilege of wandering about the Haywood house, small and shabby, but crammed from garret to cellar with interesting, and sometimes beautiful, old things. This portrait I happen to admire particularly—which fact my cousin knows, and, since my own work has begun to make some little stir at the New York and Boston exhibitions—never at home!—my elder-

ly relative has a way of getting into particularly effective poses. I wonder if—

It was some time after this, when my portrait of Cousin Constance was practically completed, that I had a tête-à-tête with Ann.

Mr. Haywood had gone to play chess with an ancient crony. Mrs. Haywood had been in bed all day—there was another domestic interregnum—Portia had gone to a ball in a misty, moonbeam sort of frock, and Ann, a rather tired and pale Ann, was entertaining me. And, incidentally, bragging of how little Portia's becoming gown had cost, measured in dollars and cents.

I looked closely at Ann, and it seemed to me that she was perceptibly thinner than when I had last seen her. Also her cheeks were wholly lacking in that clear color which was her one noticeable beauty.

"Ann," I said suddenly, "why are you so medieval, living in the twentieth century?"

"Medieval?" said Ann slowly. "Am I, Cousin Harry?"

"You emphatically are!" I replied. "More, you have no sense of true values, you lack proper self-respect, and, from an economic viewpoint, you are wantonly extravagant."

Ann sat up stiffly, like her mother, and her pale cheek pinked a little.

"Is that *all*?" she demanded haughtily.

"Well, no," I said. "But it will do for the present, so far as you alone are concerned. For, my dear child, your whole family are simply tainted, ruined, infected—and you are the dangerous germ infecting them afresh every day!"

This time Ann looked really alarmed.

"What on earth have I done?" she asked plaintively, yet with a whimsical human curiosity brightening her young, tired, sweet, brown eyes.

"You are weakening their moral fiber!" I said didactically. "The experiences we all need vitally for the development of character and ultimate happiness you have brutally snatched away from them! And some day when Fate, in one disguise or another,

snatches you away, they will all crumble to bits, and every one will see the lamentable truth which you have been trying to conceal."

Ann laughed rather weakly, but her eyes were very wide.

"You are making game of me, Cousin Harry," she said hopefully.

"On the contrary," I insisted. "I really mean that, to my mind, your influence on this household is for evil and not for good!"

For the first time as I looked at her then I saw, in her poised head, her slim neck, her resentful, lifted brows, something of the family beauty, the beauty of the old portraits, of Cousin Constance in her lavender shawl, and Portia in her drifted, flower-petal loveliness—the loveliness which as yet no millionaire of honorable lineage has appreciated and appropriated.

"What am I to do about it all?" said Ann, with simulated meekness, yet I saw that my words had sunk deep, that for once she was really contemplating her own people without prejudice or make-believe. I rubbed it in, my astuteness and her own consciousness, that I was speaking the truth.

"Who got breakfast this morning?" I asked.

"Portia has been up late for a good many nights—she had her breakfast in bed," said Ann.

"And your mother?" I asked.

"Mother isn't strong—she wouldn't be alive if we let her wear herself out as she had to do when we were children," said Ann, with some resentment.

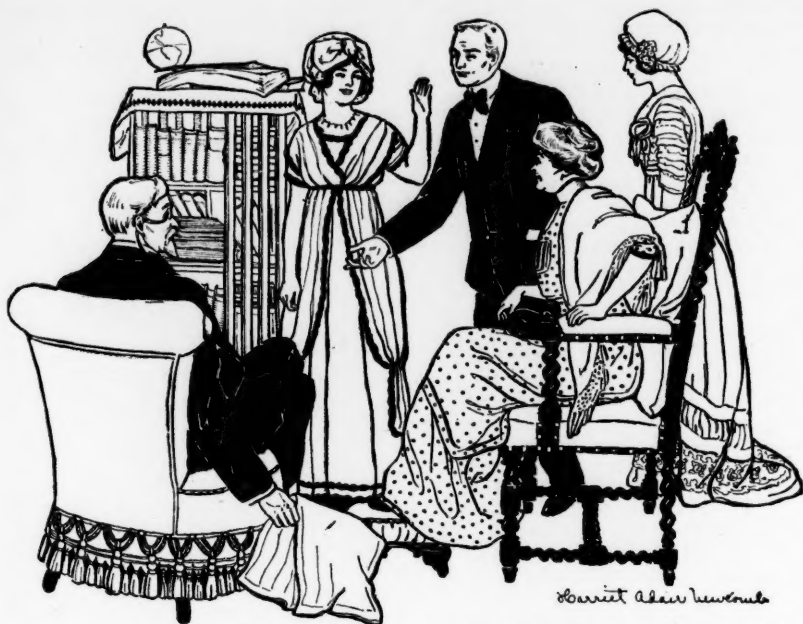
"'We' is good," said I. "But who washed the dishes, Portia's dishes?"

Ann sighed.

"Who answered the doorbell, and gave the tradesmen orders, and got lunch?" I went on. "Who went to the intelligence office to find a new maid? Not Portia, I'll warrant, nor Cousin Constance, nor either of your cosseted menfolk."

Ann capitulated.

"But, Cousin Harry, it seems dreadful, disloyal, to let you speak so of my family, even if you are related," she



Harriet Allen Newcomb

"My husband!" cried Ann crisply, competently. "Not on your life!"

protested. She was so tired that by this time I saw that her eyes were wet.

"I will stop baiting you—and criticizing your estimable relatives—if you will agree to go to Boston to visit my sister Gertrude for three months," I sternly decreed.

Ann's eyes gleamed through a shining mist.

"To Boston! Oh, Cousin Harry!"

"Will you promise?" I demanded.

"I just couldn't, dear," said Ann placatingly, almost beseechingly. "You don't appreciate how really necessary I am, how impossible it always is for me to get off for more than a few days."

"What will they do when you are married?" I said. "Like Geraldine and May?"

"Married? I?" said Ann. "Why, mother feels I should be unhappy married—and perhaps she is right." She paused, and even blushed, a swift, bright blush. "Of course, I know that Southern girls usually expect to marry,

sooner or later, but I! Why, Cousin Harry, you may think me conceited, but they really couldn't spare me."

"Suppose you up and die!" said I brutally. "You have fallen off ten pounds in the last couple of weeks—and girls of twenty-three or four do die sometimes! You couldn't sew, and wash dishes, and run errands, and cook, and clean, and perform all the hundred other jobs for your noble family if you were permanently established in Greenwood!"

Ann gasped, but by this time I had worked myself into a royal rage.

"Now, Ann Haywood," I said, "if you don't promise me that you will go to Boston, I am going to say all this to your father and mother—and more!"

"Mercy, how you do talk!" said Ann, trying to laugh. "Why, if mother heard you, she would faint."

"Promise!" said I.

A dimple appeared unexpectedly in her cheek. She looked younger than

she had seemed an hour earlier; there was even a glint of mischief in her eyes.

"Cousin Harry," she confessed, "I'm tired enough to sleep a week without turning over—but the mere word 'Boston' rests me. I've never seen Beacon Street or the Common. I don't really know whether 'Back Bay' means a street or a sheet of water or a family crest. I've seen nothing, and I ache to go everywhere and see everything."

"Promise!" I stubbornly repeated.

"There's Abbey's Holy Grail, and Puvis de Chavanne's angels. I've seen only black-and-white reproductions," said Ann dreamily.

"If you don't promise," I began.

Ann laughed, a long pealing, girlish laugh, although her cheeks were actually wet with tears of sheer fatigue.

"Yes, yes, yes! I promise—though the heavens fall! And I'm truly grateful to you now, Cousin Harry, though, later on, I may change my mind."

Doubtless this is just what she did, for when I saw her again, after the advent of Gertrude's letter, there were unmistakable evidences of battle. Ann, of course, had capitulated, and was so sorry to have to tell me that she had been obliged to refuse my sister's "intoxicating invitation." As it happened, the whole family was in the library when Ann made her pretty, regretful speech, and I gave her one look before I turned to Cousin Constance.

"I'm so sorry," I said as casually as I could manage. "Ann has been looking badly, and I hoped you and Portia could manage without her for a time—if it meant her getting into good physical condition."

"Ann is perfectly well," said my Cousin Constance stiffly.

"Possibly," I let fall carelessly. "Of course, I may have been misled by my own poor observation—as well as outside gossip."

"Gossip?" said Ann's father. "What on earth are you talking about, Hal?"

I spoke with apparent reluctance, and regret.

"They were saying at the Fosters' the other day——"

Cousin Constance was very nearly cross, as I hesitated.

"Harry, I insist upon your finishing what you started to say."

I apologized, and fumbled, to obediently repeat at last a speech which Sallie Black had really made to Dorothy Foster. According to her, there was a widespread impression that Ann played sempstress and housemaid to her family, and was thereby too fatigued to go to the dances and dinners where Portia appeared whenever she was asked!

Now, Sallie Black had a wealthy bachelor cousin, who came occasionally to see Portia; he was one of the town's few eligible young men in the sacred inner ring, socially speaking, and my small bit of gossip distressed Portia as well as Cousin Constance. Quite possibly it was the entering wedge to the family decision that Ann must go to Boston.

Certain it is that Ann went!

On her return in March I went to see her, and it was amazing, the metamorphosis which three months of Boston—and my sister Gertrude—had wrought in Ann. She was ruddy with health, her slender frame had rounded becomingly, and she wore her clothes with a haughty little air of new assurance, although Ann had always possessed, whether in calico or velvet—ancient velvets of great-grandmamma, modernized—that intangible something we call style. Best of all was the effect her absence had produced upon her family. They treated her with a new consideration. And, finest of all distinctions, from their viewpoint, it was immediately obvious that Ann had a "beau."

Her brother Bob wagged his head at me.

"Ann has turned up an ace, Hal! 'The distinguished Mr. Cruger Hallgarten' has already been down from Boston to visit her, and that honorable dufer never even looked at Portia's number-one shoe, or her eyelashes, or her near-Greek profile!"

Portia flushed scarlet, but it seemed to me that Cousin Constance turned pale.

I had Gertrude to fall back upon, and

before long I had all available data concerning Cruger Hallgarten.

"He's a queer creature, but rather fine, a long-silent man in the late forties, thoroughbred and business man in one. They say he has a genius for discovering and pushing the right man, the potentially successful enterprise. He's rich, a director of banks and things, and is supposed to have retired from active business, though he still has a downtown office, presumably to manage his own property. He's a collector of curios and books, and is said to be a musical connoisseur, and his nephew is a chum of my girls; it was through the youngster that Mr. Hallgarten met Ann in the first place, and they certainly became excellent friends."

All this was interesting, in a way reassuring, yet I felt troubled. Ann was too pretty and good, too fresh and full of promise to be contemplating marriage with any world-worn man in "the late forties," however enterprising and estimable.

Then my attention was attracted to the backsliding of Ann in the old rut. She began to look fagged, her mother and sister came out in Frenchy-looking frocks, but Ann refused one or two invitations which I fancied she would have liked to accept—had she been sufficiently a lady of leisure.

One day she and I were alone together in the crowded, old-fashioned drawing-room.

"Cousin Harry," she said, "I've been wondering whether you were not right last fall, when you said that it was an economic waste for me to spend my life doing odd jobs at home."

"Of course, I was right," I said. "And you know it perfectly well. But it looks as though your days of bondage were numbered, despite your mother's prophecies."

Ann blushed, and laid down her sewing with a certain abruptness.

"Cousin Harry, I ought to tell you first that I—I—"

She paused; frank Ann seemed unduly embarrassed.

I took her hand.

"Is it that chap Hallgarten, Ann?"

She nodded. Apparently she couldn't speak.

"When?" I asked.

"The first of April," said Ann.

"Great Scott! Is the joke to be sprung on your family that soon?" I ejaculated.

"The family don't know," said Ann presently. "Will you come and protect me while I tell them?"

I followed her into the library, and Ann went up to her father; I could see her hands trembling.

"Father," she said, "I have something to tell you all. Mr. Cruger Hallgarten—" She broke off, and I ambled fatuously to the rescue.

"It's the same old story," I said. "They all do it sooner or later. And from authentic accounts Ann's husband-elect is an uncommonly well-bred and successful gentleman!"

"My husband!" cried Ann crisply, competently. "*Not on your life!*"

She dropped me a mocking curtsy, in her eyes a dozen imps of mischief and malice cavorted gayly, her hands were no longer shaking.

"Father, I'm not *thinking* about getting married! It's only that I have signed a contract with Mr. Hallgarten which is to take effect in April, and hold good for at least eighteen months. He is taking a shop for me, and I am to run it. We will design and sell hats, blouses, and frocks to the effete plutocrats of Boston! And I am to have a salary of a hundred dollars a month—with extra commissions for sales and original designs after we are paying expenses, and later a possible share in the business. You see, even at first I can count to you all at home, and far more practically than I've ever done before."

The storm broke in a pelting hail of adjectives. Ann's mother was crying, and her father scolded her as one scolds a child of nine, but Ann showed an unexpected stubbornness as fine as it was unprecedented.

"I'm sorry, dear people, that you don't like it," she said. "But it's all settled. I'm of age, and I have signed the contract."

She turned from her father to her mother and Portia:

"And there will be no trouble about my discrediting the family, because I'm taking a trade name. I'm to be Made-moiselle Annette, and my shop will be four hundred miles from home, and within walking distance of Cousin Gertrude's—where I'm to live, at first."

The following autumn I went to Boston. I was consumed with the vice of curiosity, and, besides, I missed my youngest cousin a good deal. It was nearly seven months since I had seen

or houris—as you please—looked more like well-bred college girls than the typical milliner's assistants.

But nowhere did I see Ann.

Finally I asked humbly for "Made-moiselle Annette," and was immediately shown into an inner sanctum full of sunshine, more flowers, and interesting Japanese prints remarkable for color harmony.

By a window, writing or sketching at a desk, was my Cousin Ann.

She seemed almost as glad to see me as I was to see her. By the color in



The shop was quite full of prosperous, well-groomed women trying on stupendous headgear.

her. Moreover, I was not so popular in the Haywood household as I had been before the secession and emancipation of Ann.

It was my whim to walk into the shop unannounced, instead of meeting Ann at my sister's. The shop was small, but exquisitely appointed, and quite full of prosperous, well-groomed women trying on stupendous headgear before myriad mirrors, or discussing expensive-looking female clothes in the rear of the store. There were flowers here and there, chrysanthemums, and even fresh, long-stemmed roses, in November. The young clerks, or attendants,

her cheeks, the light in her eyes, the fine contours of her vigorous body I judged that her life agreed with her.

I asked her to lunch with me, and she accepted. We went to a modest little restaurant near by, a haunt of artists and literary folk which I knew of old, and there, over an excellent luncheon, Ann told me of her work and her astonishingly quick success. She was already netting considerably more than she had been guaranteed for the first year, although she credited this more to the wisdom of Mr. Hallgarten's choice of situation and equipment than to her own abilities.

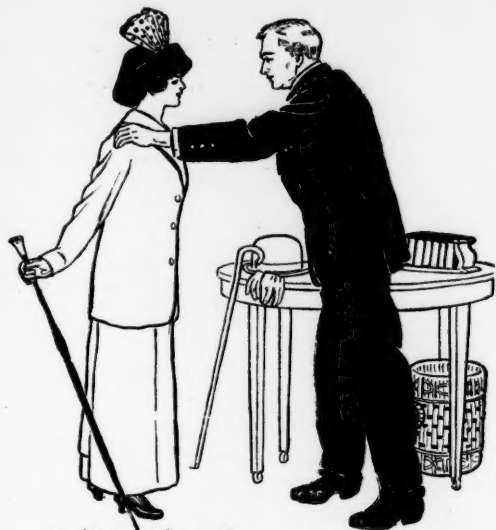


Illustration by Helen Russell

Ann stood as steady as a grenadier on parade.

I was proud enough of her, and of my own prophetic vision to which she attributed more importance than it, or I, deserved. But, somehow, as I looked at her bloom, her sweet, youthful assurance, her charming clothes, I felt a little more middle-aged and lonesome than usual, particularly when a fresh-colored, athletic youngster, not over twenty-six or seven, bowed to Ann across the room, and then came eagerly over to speak to her. He was presented to me as Mr. Herman Hallgarten, nephew of Ann's employer, and, while he was handsome and agreeable, he repelled me, for some reason. However, he chatted only a few moments, and later Ann and I walked uptown together.

"I must get back to the shop by half past three," said Ann, "but I have time to run in and see Gertie's face when you appear!"

My sister was as jubilant as Ann had anticipated; for a moment she and I were alone while Ann went up to her room.

"Well, what do you think of her—and it?" said Gertrude, with an air of

exploiting a newly risen opera star of the first magnitude. "The child is a combination of social tact and executive ability such as I've never seen before—that and her instinct for color and line would suggest an upbringing in Paris instead of an American city of the second rank. Only Cruger Hallgarten dreamed it was in her."

"Is she engaged to that young cub, his nephew?" I asked.

Gertrude looked at me steadily; we heard Ann whistling on the stair.

"You silly *stupid!*" said my sister explosively, and, just as Ann entered, she gave me a push with both hands, and ran out of the room.

I looked at Ann, whose face was suddenly scarlet. I had a realization of blood pounding in my ears, hammering at my temples; I put my hands on Ann's shoulders, and realized that they were trembling, but Ann stood as steady as a grenadier on parade.

"My God—Ann, what is the matter with me?" I asked idiotically.

Then Ann laughed, and, in some inexplicable, automatic fashion, my arms went around her waist! In her little-girl days I had kissed Ann, as most Southern men kiss even their most distant female relatives, but this kiss was not like the kisses of other years.

"Ann," I stammered finally, "I am over forty years old—forty-three, to be exact!"

"Anybody would have supposed you were eighty—the way you have always grandfathered me," cried Ann, with a little sob which was some way related to a laugh, and yet not in the least hysterical. "After all, I'm nearly twenty-six myself, and I never cared a pin for any of the green boys who have wanted to marry me!"

By this time we were sitting on the convenient—and sympathetic—divan.

"Of course, you realize that I want

to go on with my work," said Ann at last. "You will have to come to Boston—your pictures are far better known here than at home, particularly since that portrait of mother took the Hanlon prize."

"Ann," said I, "did I rescue you from the family toils for this—so that I may practically live off your dear bones for the rest of my life?"

"Bones!" ejaculated Ann, with indignation. "Feel my arm! Isn't it round, isn't it firm? Did you ever see a healthier specimen than I am at this moment? Do you remember how thin and peaked I used to get at home, and isn't the change all due to the fact that you helped me to discover work I love—that is a joy to plan and an adventure to carry out? And there's a future to it——" She broke off abruptly. "Oh, Hal, it's so many years since any of the Haywoods have earned more than a bald, meager, country-mouse living."

Her square, small chin was quite tremulous at the memory of all the impecunious Haywoods.

"Before leaving home I observed that

your family now have two servants of a most superior brand," I remarked.

"And all their sewing put out," Ann added, and then with a wistful little sigh: "Harry, dear, do you suppose I shall *always* be feeling this guilty secret thrill—for having deserted—after all those——"

I metaphorically brushed aside her guilt.

"Mine the conscientious qualms, infant! I would rather walk the plank than announce our engagement to your trusting, unsuspecting family!"

Ann looked at me with suddenly narrowed gaze, then she blushed and dimpled in that extraordinarily alluring way which she recently developed. In her chuckle there was a mischievous relish of something subtle, something hidden. I didn't wholly understand that laugh.

"You blind, absurd, humble-pie man creature! Don't you realize—yet—how primitive the Haywoods are! Don't you know that mother and Portia have been telling each other for years that, well—that they *knew* I'd never land you!"



October Roses

SOFT as your cheek and quite as fair,
The frail October roses bloom;
They meet no breath of scorching air;
Fogs, like the silks an Eastern loom
Might weave for Moslem beauties, veil
In the sweet morning time their face,
Nor do the mellow noons avail
To fade their sweet and tinted grace.

Still less, the mantled autumn eves
When smoke's adrift, and cricket tune,
And through the poplar's scattering leaves
Looks out a wistful shred of moon.
Brave, touching flowers, with death so near!
So Love endures, though comes the rime
Of winter; though our life's long year
Rounds surely to its autumn time.

JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING.

How We Elect Our Presidents

By Forbes Lindsay

If you lived in England, you would miss all the fun and excitement of electing a head to the government. There nature attends to this business. Here we spend millions, and take a deal of trouble in the matter. It is a serious affair, of course, but from the time that the presidential pot commences to simmer, at the beginning of an election year, until it boils over in November, the situation is constantly relieved by humor. Cartoonists and professional jokesmiths create it, and the actors in the great political drama often supply it unwittingly.

If it were not for this relief, the nomination and election of a president would be a very grim and wearisome task. The men who bear the burden of the struggle welcome the flashes of fun and the shafts of wit that momentarily break the strain and stress of hard-fought contests.

One of these happy diversions occurred during a session of the recent Republican convention, when Governor Hadley received a telegram which read: "For the sake of peace, have some one nominate Taft for president, and Roosevelt for vice president." The message was handed round the hall when excitement was at white heat, and a bitter controversy between the Taft and Roosevelt factions was raging. The laugh that it raised relaxed the tension, and cooled the atmosphere as a summer shower following a thunderstorm.

Have you ever seen opposing lawyers in an important criminal trial, or rival politicians on the same platform? You would suppose them to be hereditary enemies, and imagine from their language that they must fly at each other's throats as soon as they get out of the hall or courtroom. If you could see

them half an hour afterward, it would as likely as not be lunching together, exchanging jokes, and sharing a bottle of wine. Our people enter into a presidential campaign with intense earnestness, which causes foreigners to think that there is a revolution in the air, but an undercurrent of good nature makes the situation much less serious than it appears to be on the surface.

We elect a president in every year that is evenly divisible by four, and perhaps you imagine that the matter is only attended to every fourth year. This is far from being the fact. The machinery employed in the process has hardly accomplished its purpose in one case before it is set in motion for another occasion. It often happens that, ere twelve months have elapsed after the inauguration of a president, the politicians are planning and working for a successor. Here and there the name of some comparatively little-known individual appears in the newspapers, with interesting paragraphs relating to his personality, or half-veiled hints of his qualifications for high office.

These early advances are in the nature of "feelers." You have probably read many of them without suspecting their purpose. If, after a fair trial, these gentle insinuations appear to tickle the popular fancy, the friends of the individual who is being subtly advertised decide to launch an open "boom" in his favor. Sometimes the subject of a "presidential boom" has already attracted national attention by some spectacular public service, by advancing novel ideas, or by the display of extraordinary ability, so that the politicians believe him to be a man for whom they can secure wide support.

Bryce, in his "American Common-

wealth"—which you cannot do better than to read if you want to understand the theory and practice of our government—happily distinguishes the man who is seeking a nomination from one who has received it, by calling the former an "aspirant," and the latter a "candidate." Let us adopt the same terms.

We have, then, a man who, for one or another reason, justifies his friends in the belief that they may put him forward as an aspirant to the presidency with reasonable prospect of success. The first overtures through the press are encouraging, and he is frankly referred to as "presidential timber," meaning material from which presidents are made. The local pride and enthusiasm of the people of his State are readily aroused.

The next step is to canvass influential politicians of his party all over the country, with a view to securing the indorsement of as many as may be of them. Meanwhile the aspirant is kept as much as possible in the limelight. Certain newspapers and magazines are induced to give him publicity through their columns. He makes public speeches as often as the opportunity occurs. In short, every means of making him known to the people at large is employed. In the case of one of these men who has been cleverly boomed for six or eight months, so that every one feels that he knows everything about him, you would be surprised, if you should stop to think about it, to realize that one short year previous you had never heard his name.

In the spring of each presidential year the voters of every State select delegates to the national conventions of their respective parties. For each congressman to which a State is entitled in the Federal legislature it is allowed two delegates, and, in addition, four delegates at large, being twice the number of its senators. For example, Ohio, as perhaps you know, has twenty-two members in the House of Representatives, and, like all States, two in the Senate. In the national convention, therefore, it is represented by forty-eight delegates.

In some cases, the local conventions, when electing delegates, instruct them as to their votes at the national convention; in others they are left free to follow their inclinations or judgment. Thus, one congressional district may pledge its delegates to vote for a certain aspirant until the contest is decided by a nomination. As a rule, however, the instructions of delegates in this respect are not considered binding after the first ballot is cast in the convention.

This system, as you will perceive, is similar to that by which the popular representation in Congress is secured. It is intended to assure the widest and most thorough representation of the people in the conventions which nominate the candidates for the presidency. In theory the nominee of a national convention is as much the people's choice as are the members of Congress. In fact, this is far from being the case. With a view to giving even greater opportunity for the expression of popular sentiment, a number of States have in the past few years adopted what is called the "direct-primary" system. In such States the voters, in addition to balloting for delegates, register their preferences in the matter of presidential candidates, and the delegates are presumed to be bound by the wishes of the majority as indicated by the vote. This system had its first fair trial in the present year, and its merits or defects cannot yet be conclusively pronounced upon. It gave rise to almost all the disputes between the Taft and Roosevelt factions, and the contests for seats in the Republican national convention.

At dates, usually in June, fixed by the national committee of each party, their respective conventions are held. The delegates assemble at the place chosen, to perform two important tasks—the nomination of candidates for the offices of president and vice president, and the adoption of a party platform. There is a great deal of minor business which is left to different committees.

The members of a national convention are not a deliberative body. Arguments may be made in speeches from the platform, but the matters in ques-

tion are not submitted to the delegates for debate. All they are called upon to do is to vote one way or another upon motions put before them by the chairman. The names of different aspirants are proposed and seconded in flowery speeches, and then submitted to the ballot. Even the platform, as the formal declaration of the principles on which the party stands is called, is presented to the convention ready-made, and generally accepted without dissent or amendment.

The majority of delegates go to the convention instructed as to the desires of their constituents, and the remainder have a very close idea as to what those desires are, even though they have not been explicitly imposed upon them. No doubt you will think that under these circumstances it is quite an easy matter to determine which of the aspirants for the nomination shall receive it. That would be the case if the delegates were to mail their votes from their homes instead of meeting to record them. Under such an arrangement it would almost always be found that one man had in his favor from the outset the number of votes necessary for nomination.

As it is, however, the delegates have no sooner arrived in the convention city than they are subjected to all manner of influences. Argument and persuasion are brought to bear upon them day and night in the convention hall and outside of it. Political leaders and managers of various aspirants are incessantly busy, bolstering up the courage of their adherents, and trying to gain recruits to their ranks from the followers of rivals.

The real and all-absorbing business of the convention commences when the chairman announces that nominations for the presidency of the United States of America are in order. The roll of the States is then called, commencing with Alabama, and finishing with Wisconsin. If the delegation from Alabama desires to put forward a citizen of the State, it claims the platform for a speaker, not necessarily of the same State, who has prepared a nominating speech. He is followed by one or two,

or perhaps as many as half a dozen, others who second the nomination in florid language. Should Alabama not wish to exercise the nominating privilege, its chairman states the fact; or he may announce that his delegation resigns its right to Rhode Island, or Virginia, or some other State, whose turn would not otherwise come until toward the close of the roll.

Each State having been called upon in turn, and all the nominations being in, the balloting commences, and is proceeded with in alphabetical order. According to the rules of the Republican party, each delegate may vote independently of the other members of his delegation. With the Democrats, what is called "the unit rule" prevails. Under it each State's delegation must cast a solid vote. To make this clearer: In a Republican convention the thirty votes of Indiana might be split up, and cast for two, or even three or four, different aspirants. In a Democratic convention they would all need to be registered in favor of one nominee. The balloting is effected by calling the roll of States, commencing as before with Alabama and going down the list to Wisconsin. As Alabama is called, the chairman of its delegation announces that Alabama's twenty-four votes are cast solid for such or such a nominee, or that Alabama casts sixteen votes for so and so, and eight votes for some one else.

When the votes of all the States have been cast and tallied, they are announced by the chairman of the convention. In a Republican convention, if it is found that any one of the nominees has a majority, he is declared to have secured the nomination of the party. In a Democratic convention he must gain two-thirds of all the votes of the delegates. In case the first ballot fails to secure the nomination for any one of the aspirants, another ballot is taken, and if that fails of definite result, the balloting is continued until a nomination is effected. It has often happened that the struggle between two strong rival aspirants has carried the balloting through several days, with the result

ultimately of a "dark horse"—that is to say, a man not previously thought of in the connection—being nominated as a compromise, or because neither faction would throw its strength to the other side. Thus a "deadlock" in the Republican convention of 1880 was broken by the nomination of Garfield on the thirty-sixth ballot.

By the time that the nomination for the office of president has been arrived at, the delegates are generally thoroughly tired, and their enthusiasm has been worn out. They face the remaining task of nominating a vice president with little interest and an impatient desire to get through with the proceeding and go home. It is consequently often the case that the candidate for the minor office is chosen with very little deliberation. He is frequently selected with the idea of applying balm to the wounded feelings of a faction which has been defeated in the preceding contest, or because it is believed for one reason or another that his presence on the ticket will attract a number of doubtful votes to the party, or not seldom because he is a man of wealth, who may contribute heavily to the campaign expenses.

In the majority of cases this almost careless manner of selecting a candidate for the vice presidency works no particular harm, because the office is largely an honorary one, but you can easily realize that the practice is dangerous, because the vice president may, as has been the case on several occasions, be called upon to fill the higher office on account of the death of the man elected to it.

The standard bearers of the respective parties having been chosen, the campaign proper commences. It extends over four months, the latter half being the time of greater excitement and intensity.

A presidential year is an even more strenuous period than you would infer from what you see on the surface. A tremendous amount of work is done behind the scenes. During July and August little activity is in evidence, but there is a great deal "doing," none the less. No sooner have the conventions

disbanded than the political leaders, from ward captains to State bosses, get busy in a variety of ways. The national committees, composed of a member from each State, meet. These committees direct the canvasses of their respective candidates.

The first consideration is that of ways and means. Men who have the qualities that make the "debt raiser" of a church congregation one of its most valued members are detailed to see wealthy citizens and corporations whose interests will be promoted by the success of a certain candidate, and to induce these to contribute to the campaign fund.

The committee also selects a number of speakers to "take the stump," and apportion out the country between them. It prepares and prints tons of pamphlets and leaflets, distributes them broadcast through the mails, and supplies them in quantities to local committees in different parts of the country. It arranges with newspapers and maintains a press bureau for the purpose of furnishing prepared news items and articles for insertion in the dailies.

The national committee also cooperates with numerous campaign organizations in the various States. It lends speakers to them, gives them unlimited quantities of campaign literature, sometimes furnishes them with funds, and in general directs and advises them. In addition to a central committee in each State, there are countless numbers of bodies formed in the cities and rural districts for similar purposes. There are "campaign clubs," whose membership is composed of certain nationalities or of men engaged in certain vocations. Besides these many and various organizations, the national committee of each party employs thousands of paid agents in all sorts of capacities.

By the beginning of September this complex machinery is in smooth running order, and warmed up to its work. Then follow sixty days of an excited struggle. In town and country, halls are nightly filled with people listening to political "spellbinders," as persuasive orators are commonly called. The newspapers devote three-fourths of their

space to reports of speeches and items relating to the leaders and their lieutenants. Citizens give a large portion of their time—often more than they can properly spare—to discussion of the issues, and of the merits of the respective candidates. At length the great decisive day, the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, arrives, and the outcome of all the labor and expense and scheming is brought to a head.

Now, let us see by what legal processes our presidents are actually elected. We need not go into the qualifications for a voter. You probably know what they are, and it isn't necessary to remind you that in a few States women are granted the privilege of voting on equal terms with men. Nor need we dwell upon the manner in which the popular vote is cast. As you have seen your neighbors voting in your home precinct, so others vote at the same time in hundreds of thousands of precincts all over the United States. These votes are checked, registered, and recorded, merged in the county vote, and ultimately in that of the State. The final count of all those returned by the voters of the United States decides the fate of the opposing candidates.

As a matter of fact, the people do not elect a president upon Election Day in November, or at any other time. They do so in effect, it is true, but in reality they vote for electors, who meet on the second Monday of the following January, and themselves ballot for the president of the United States.

The Electoral College, in our day, appears to be about as superfluous as the vermiform appendix, but at the time of its origin it served a distinctly useful purpose. When the nation was in its infancy, there was much greater opportunity for juggling with the popular vote than there is at present. Then again, the masses were ignorant, and incapable of exercising intelligent judgment. They traveled little, and had few newspapers to enlighten them. Their knowledge and notions of any but local characters were very hazy. Under the circumstances, the framers of the Constitution wisely provided that the people

should vote for representatives in what is called the Electoral College, these representatives in their turn to elect a president and a vice president by the vote of a majority of their number.

In the Electoral College, the States have the same representation as they have in the national Congress. The electors have always been supposed to voice the sentiment of the voters of the States which they represent, casting the entire vote of the State in block. It is clearly possible, however, that the majority of the Electoral College might cast their votes for a man other than he who had received a majority of the popular vote. In fact, this actually happened in 1876, when the Electoral College by one vote gave the presidency to Hayes, although Tilden had, according to the count of his opponents, a majority of 252,224 in the popular election.

The electors of each State meet at some place within it, in the second week of January following the presidential election, and register their votes for the offices of president and vice president. These are then signed and sealed, and forwarded to Washington, addressed to the president of the Senate, who is also the vice president of the United States. He is directed by the Constitution to open the certificate "in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, and the vote shall then be counted." Whether it was intended that they should be counted by the legislators assembled, by the president of the Senate, or by all of these jointly, has been the subject of hot dispute, and was an important point in the decision of the Hayes-Tilden contest.

This affair, which brought the country to the verge of revolution, the close count in the Hancock-Garfield election, and in the Cleveland-Blaine struggle of 1884, which turned upon little more than one thousand majority in a vote of nearly six million in the State of New York, showed the necessity of having some legal provision for the determination of disputed electoral votes, and a statute was enacted in 1887 which will probably meet any future contingencies of the kind.



The Taming of a Tyrant

By Ellen Childe Emerson

Author of "The Valley," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY G. C. PUGSLEY

BASIL FORD walked slowly down the thickly carpeted stairs of the small, expensive hotel in Mayfair which his grandmother considered the only comfortable house in London. He was nursing a feeling of irritation, growing frequent of late, against that stately and dominant old lady, who had sent him to the office with some trivial complaint about handkerchiefs lost in the wash. Why on earth couldn't she send her maid on that sort of errand? And why on earth hadn't he suggested it?

He had fetched and carried for his grandmother for so long that it had become second nature; he had never dreamed of rebellion, and rarely awoke to the fact of his subservience. In her selfish way she adored him, and impressed it upon him that he owed her deep gratitude therefor. Being of a credulous disposition, he believed her, and was as a rule the most dutiful of grandsons; but something had jangled the harmony of his indolent sweet temper this November morning, and he had flung impatiently out of the cozy sitting room where Mrs. Ford sat enthroned before a bright fire, and was railing at himself here on the stairs for a soft-headed "sissy," tied to an old woman's apron string.

Robert, the irreproachable doorman, came toward him as he reached the lowest stair.

"A letter for you, sir, to be given into your own 'and, the little girl said."

"A little girl? What little girl?"

"A little foreign girl, I should judge, sir, from her looks, but she talked English all right, and very firm she were, sir. 'Into his own 'and, if you please,' she says, with quite an hair, sir, like a young lady. But, of course, sir, a young lady of that age would not be coming 'ere alone with a note."

"Discerning Robert, of course not!" said Basil, amused at the unwonted burst of eloquence from the wooden one. "But evidently a little girl, or a young lady, of some force of character!"

His smile died as he reached his hand for the letter, and his eyes fell on the handwriting. He drew in his breath sharply. It was the writing he had watched for so eagerly as a little boy at school, for it used to mean a letter from his big, handsome father, perhaps saying he was coming to see him, and give him one of those wonderful half holidays that were the sweetest memories the boy had. What did it say, now, after those awful twelve years of silence? Basil turned blindly into a little reception room, mercifully empty, and tore open the envelope, his heart beating painfully with excitement. He moved nearer to the electric light, for very little daylight filtered into the house from the narrow street this wintry morning, and his eyes were strangely dim. It was a long letter, dated from a street near the Strand.

DEAR BASIL: What did my mother tell you, I wonder? Well, never mind that now. These are the facts: Twelve years ago, I

married Irma Porloff, described by my mother to me, and possibly also to you, as a girl out of the gutter. She was in the chorus of a third-rate musical comedy company when I met her, a slip of a girl, only seventeen, with a beautiful face, and a pure, unselfish soul, and she was a loving, faithful wife to me until she died two years ago, leaving me our daughter Olga, the sweetest little comforter man ever had. You can probably form some idea of your grandmother's attitude, even if she has not told you in so many words that she entirely renounced me, discontinued the generous allowance she had always made me—she did

not approve of settling anything on me during her lifetime, so she kept me, grown man with wife and child as I was, dangling on a chain of quarterly checks—and announced that she would keep you, and bring you up to be some consolation to her for my having crushed her life. She was always dramatic about her own sensations, was my mother.

This was a blow. Believe me, my boy, I did love you, although, perhaps, I seemed to leave you very easily. You were always like your mother, whom I missed so sorely that my very loneliness drove me into my second marriage with poor little Irma; and I would have done my best for you. But I did not dispute my mother—somehow one doesn't—and I knew that in a material way I could do pitifully little for you, my own income from my father being infinitesimal, and my ability to earn more a negligible quantity in those days. I have done something at writing since, and Olga and I have butter on our bread, but I could not have given you the education you had a right to expect.

I did write to you periodically for several years, but my letters were always returned—not by you, I know that. Now you are twenty-four, and when I saw you to-day, driving with my mother, and looking more than ever like Alice, the lucky chance of your being in London and within my reach made me suddenly decide to try once more

to get in touch with you, and find out if there were anything left of the boy heart that used to love me.

I shall send little Olga with this in the morning—your sister, Basil, and well worth your making her acquaintance—and she will find out if you are stopping at the same old place, and leave the letter for you. I cannot imagine my mother condescending to any other hotel, and I don't venture to go myself, for fear of being recognized, and consequent awkwardnesses. If you come to see us, I should advise not mentioning it beforehand. My mother looked quite unchanged, so handsome, and hard, and successful.

Have the years brought her no softness? After all, poor mother! She misses so many sides of life. Try to find your way to us soon.

J. E. F.



"A letter for you, sir, to be given into your own 'and, the little girl said."

Basil sat for a long time, his head in his hands, living over again his boyish sorrow of twelve years ago, and fitting his father's story to his grandmother's few stern, grudging answers to his tearful storm of questions when he heard that he was never to see papa again.

"He has disgraced me, and you, and your mother's memory, and he does not love you or he would not have done it. He has married a dreadful

woman, not fit to be mentioned by decent people, and I never wish to hear his name again."

This had been the sum of his knowledge, and he obediently ceased to speak of his dear, lost father, and laid the memory of all their happy times together away in his heart, together with a dim picture of his young mother, dead long before. And now to find that he had not been forgotten, after all! Fierce anger against his grandmother for con-

cealing his letters surged up in him. What right had she to steal his letters, which would have been such a comfort to his sore heart? It was wicked of her, dishonorable.

He started up; of course, he would go to his father at once, he would live with him, he would show his grandmother that she did not own him, body and soul, any longer. What life was it for a man to travel about with an old lady, buying tickets, and paying bills, and walking through galleries, always putting off from month to month the time when he should go back to New York, and start work. He faltered for a moment, and colored. With much else that was young and childish in him, for all his twenty-four years, there was a child's instinctive sense of justice and fair play; it was not all his grandmother's fault, he loved loafing about England and the Continent himself, and work in a New York office did not smile to him.

Well, he would change all that now; he would set to work at something, anything, and help his father to take care of his little sister. He thrilled, lonely only child that he had been, at the thought of a sister of his own. And in this softened mood he felt he could not go without a word; he went to a writing table and scribbled a note to his grandmother.

My father is in London. I am going to see him. I shall not be back till late.

BASIL.

An inherent sense of humor, which he did not get from the distaff side of the house, brought a twinkle to his eye at the thought of the bombshell that innocent-looking envelope contained for the comfortable sitting room upstairs. Then he rejoiced the soul of the blameless Robert by means of a coin of the realm, caused a taxi to be whistled up, and whizzed eastward, remarking to the chauffeur's back, "I hope the laundress is using those handkerchiefs for kettle holders!"

Mrs. Ford sat by her sitting-room fire in a white heat of indignation that

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put to shame the mild glow of the soft coal. She was one of those much-to-be-pitied women who have never found their master, and whose real strength and nobility of character have been warped and soured by too great power over gentle, yielding natures. Her husband, lovable and sensitive, had never forgiven himself for marrying an heiress without greatly caring for her, and during their brief married life had never contradicted or coerced her. Jack, her son, up to the time of his sensational second marriage, had been dutiful and affectionate, and Alice, his first wife, was too young to make much stand against her mother-in-law; so that all her world seemed in a conspiracy to spoil her.

She had never for an instant dreamed of a defection on Basil's part, and this astonishing act of insubordination startled her quite as much as he had foreseen. How dared he to rush off like that, on the spur of the moment, to see his father, whom she had obliterated out of existence, and probably that papist dancer as well? The fact, which had come to her ears, that Irma Porloff was a devout Roman Catholic, was a crowning proof of infamy, for it was an article in Mrs. Ford's creed that the Scarlet Woman sheltered most of the carnal sins under her mantle.

She said "Come in" sharply, as some one knocked at the door, but was unprepared for the visitor who responded. It was a slender, dark-eyed little girl who stood on the threshold, dressed with a simple picturesqueness that emphasized a certain grace and distinction of carriage, rare in a half-grown girl. She came forward quietly, without shyness or self-consciousness, and looked up from under a shady black hat.

"I suppose you must be my grandmother. I am Olga Ford."

Her voice was low and clear, and she spoke with extraordinary purity of accent for a "child of the gutter."

"You have come to the wrong room. There is some mistake. I have no granddaughter."

Strong men had quailed before that icy tone in Mrs. Ford's voice, but this

child advanced untroubled, a smile lighting up her small, charming face.

"Oh, no, it is quite all right. Very likely you have never heard of me, but I have come from brother Basil, to explain things to you. May I sit down?"

She perched like a bird on the arm of a great chair, and folded her hands.

Mrs. Ford was, to speak vulgarly, flabbergasted, and could only gasp: "From—brother—Basil?"

"Yes; that is, he did not send me. He and father had to go out, to see about a room for Basil, and they asked me to send you the note, but I am quite accustomed to going about London by myself, so I took a cab instead of sending a messenger. You see, I always take care of father, though I am so little and he is so big. My mother, who is a saint in paradise," crossing herself under the very nose of incarnate Protestantism, "left him in my care when she died." The dark eyes filled with tears, but the sweet voice went steadily on. "She said: 'Thou must be a mother to him.' We spoke German together, my mother and I; she was born in Vienna. 'He will need a great deal of care, in all the little foolish things, but in the great, wise things thou must remember he knows best.' And it is quite true, he needs some one to take care of him, as you must remember, since you are his mother."

Mrs. Ford winced, and colored angrily, but the fountains of her speech seemed dried up before this amazing child, who talked on, sure of herself, and of the interest of her audience.

"But he is wonderful, my father, so handsome, and so clever, and adorable to me always, and we have such good little times together. Now that brother Basil has come to live with us, it will be even better, and I shall have two great babies, who think they are taking care of me!" Not a word of selfish regret that she must share her father, only joy in her new brother. "It will be good for them to be together, after all these years. Father told me it was a dreadful muddle and misunderstanding that separated them, and that you were in the misunderstanding, too, so it came

into my mind that I had better come and see you, instead of just sending the note. Perhaps I can explain anything you don't understand. Did they tell you he was dead? I asked father if he thought that was the reason, and he said: 'That's a good guess, Midget. I was dead to her, you see, and so she didn't look for me.'"

She paused for a reply, but Mrs. Ford was still speechlessly staring at her, so she went on:

"You never saw my mother, I think?"

Mrs. Ford shook her head.

"I thought not. She never spoke of having seen you, but she used to pity you very much, about father, you know, and your being separated from him. She was so pretty and sweet, but very delicate. The most graceful dancer they had in the company, Herr Blumenstein, her old manager, told me, but not strong enough for the life. It's a devil of a life, you know."

"Is it?" asked Mrs. Ford helplessly, like a person in a trance.

She wondered if the world were coming to an end. No one in all her life had spoken to her as this child was speaking, this daughter of a dancer, this scum—and then a feeling new to the self-sufficient Mrs. Ford came over her, a feeling almost of shame. Had not this despised dancer, and her husband, Jack Ford, cast off and disowned by his mother, been more generous than she deserved? They spared her in speaking to their child of the past. How had she spoken of them all these years, but with bitterness and rancor, trying to poison Basil's mind against his father, trying to persuade him that his father had forgotten him, when she knew how he hungered for the boy?

And now verily she was punished, for the grandson she had loved and cherished left her for his derelict father and sister, throwing all her devotion and indulgence to the winds. It was very, very hard on her; what terrible troubles she had! Her momentary softening and better feeling were drowned by a wave of self-pity, and she covered her face with her hands, and sobbed: "Oh, Basil, Basil!"



Mrs. Ford winced, and colored angrily, but the fountains of her speech seemed dried up before this amazing child.

Little Olga flew to comfort her.

"Ah, now I have made you cry, and I am so sorry. Don't worry about Basil; he will come back and see you, I am sure, when I ask him, grandmother." Mrs. Ford jumped, but Olga's arm was around her neck, so she subsided again. "He was angry when he went out, but he did not mean it, I know."

"What did he say, then?" straightening up decidedly this time.

"Oh, it was not pretty what he said, but men often talk like that without meaning anything."

"He is a wicked, ungrateful boy, like his wicked father before him, and as

for your mother——" But angry as she was, she stopped short before the words left her lips. "Of course, he will come back when I send for him," with a short, disagreeable laugh that strikingly resembled a snort. "But I insist upon knowing what he said, and I wish you to tell me the truth, child."

She had recovered her speech now, and was making use of it in her worst manner.

"I do not tell lies," said Olga, drawing away with a proud lift of her head, "and I will tell you what he said, not because you 'insist,' but because I think perhaps he meant it, after all. He said

you had tried to spoil his life, and he never wanted to see you again, and you could go to hell! There! I knew you would not like it, but you should not say such things of him, or of father. I am very sorry I came to see you, for you seem to misunderstand just as much as ever. I thought you would be so glad to hear about father and mother—I do not talk of them to strangers—but you are not glad one bit."

All her tender, protecting manner had gone when she realized that she had an antagonist to deal with; not, as she had taken for granted, a lonely mother, yearning for her lost son. Her eyes were brilliant with indignant tears, and she backed toward the door with the air of a little tigress guarding her cubs.

Mrs. Ford rose from her chair impulsively, but let her go without a word, and sank back again as the door closed, her brain in a whirl. What manner of child was this, who feared her no more than if she were a kitten playing on the hearthrug; who was so quick to sympathize with suffering, and equally quick to fly into a passion if her dearest were attacked? She tried to think of her as a pert, precocious little horror, but no, Barbara Ford's intelligence refused to give her outraged self-esteem that consolation. The child was old and wise with a very tender wisdom—unchildlike truly, but what a golden heart to keep her young even when her head should be gray!

She had secretly longed for a daughter in the old days before the crust of selfishness had grown so thick over her heart, and the touch of Olga's arm on her neck had awakened long-forgotten emotions. She had never encouraged demonstrations, and so it came about that no one ever caressed her. It was strange and pleasant to be patted by that tender little hand.

She felt old, and weary, and spiritless. Every one had failed her. They had feared her, and lied to her while they were with her, and as soon as ever they could they left her. Every one had lied to her, to keep her pacified, except this fearless child, with her loving heart, who had flashed into her life

for a moment, and thrown a blinding light on many things, and then had left her, she, too, in hot anger.

But this could not, should not, be the end. She would send for Jack, and for Basil, and tell them—well, what would she tell them? That she was sorry? That she wanted them to come back on their own terms, and bring Irma Porloff's daughter with them? No, a thousand times no! They were in the wrong; they must say so. She would accept the child, and give her an education, and teach her her place.

Her hand brushed against Basil's letter, lying forgotten beside her, and she picked it up, and opened it, looking almost her august self once more, at the thought of again dominating her world.

I may come to forgive you in time for keeping my father's letters from me. For the present we had better not meet. I shall live with my father and sister, and try to earn an honest living. You will think me ungrateful, of course, but just now I feel no gratitude for having been cheated out of my birthright, and brought up in senseless luxury, while your own son was left in poverty.

His father, grown philosophic through the years, would have smiled at the poor boy's heroics, but he had sealed the note without showing it to him, and without signature or address. The old lady read it through incredulously, once, and then again. Until that moment she had not believed in the finality of the catastrophe which had overtaken her, but the few bitter words from the boy, whom, in her own way, she had loved, broke down her last defense. A strange feeling in her head, which had been troubling her all day, suddenly became acute pain; something seemed to snap, and, trying to call for her maid, she staggered forward, and fell with a little, choking cry.

"By Jove, Basil, I'm utterly at a loss. There she lies, speechless, and breaking her heart for something or somebody, God knows what. It isn't for you, nor for me, we've both abased ourselves sufficiently, and she understands well enough what you say to her. But I can't bear the pleading look in her poor,

twisted face. She who has never been pathetic before in her life."

They were in the hotel sitting room, whence Mrs. Ford had been carried to her bed, stricken dumb and helpless, the day before. Sarah, her elderly maid, a resourceful person, read the crumpled note on the floor, and by dint of some fine amateur detective work, had by night got hold of the very taxi driver who had taken Basil to his father in the morning, and dispatched him with an urgent request to come early the next day. Olga begged to come, too, reproaching herself bitterly, in her old-fashioned way, for the "dreadful things" she had said to "poor grandmother," and was curled up in an armchair by the window, looking up eagerly as news came from time to time from the hushed sick room adjoining.

"Do you think Olga could help us out?" Basil asked in a low tone. "She seems such a wonderfully quick-witted little thing, she might have an intuition."

"I don't like to take her in there," her father said reluctantly. "She has had a lot of sadness in her life, poor kiddie, and she is such a little brick one forgets she is only a child."

Olga's quick ear had caught some of the low-spoken words, and she was beside them in an instant.

"Oh, please, father, dear, do let me speak to her. Perhaps, as Basil says,



A look almost of joy came into the tragic eyes.

I might discover something, and you know I ought to tell her I am sorry I got her in such a temper yesterday."

"I can't keep anything from those long ears, can I, Midget?" with an affectionate hug. "Well, dear, since you have heard, come along. You generally seem to know best, though where you learned your wisdom Heaven alone knows. Remember, she is not as ill as she looks; they say she is not in pain, so don't go breaking your tender little heart over her."

He led her in, and bent over the face on the pillow.

"Mother, my little girl wants to tell you she is sorry for some rude things she said to you yesterday. May she speak to you?"

A look almost of joy came into the tragic eyes, and when Olga laid her small, cool fingers on the rigid hand, her tired eyelids dropped peacefully, and she seemed to sleep.

Ten days later, Mr. Marshall, lawyer and general factotum to Mrs. Ford and her father before her, hurriedly summoned from New York, was holding a family council with Jack Ford and his son.

"Your mother's wishes are very clear, my dear Jack. You, and your son, and daughter are to go back to her old home with her, as soon as she can be moved, and live with her henceforth. She has agreed by signs to certain settlements I think only fair, so that, on the one condition of living with her, you will be independent."

"Well, all I can say is, I think it very high-handed," broke in Basil hotly. "I know she is ill, and I have forgiven a lot, but why my father should have to meekly give up having his own home, and go to live with his mother, who cast him off, and treated him like a yellow dog, just because she has had a stroke of paralysis——"

"Gently, old boy, nothing has been settled yet. I own, Marshall, that it would be very distasteful to me to go back to the home that turned me out, and take with me the child whose mother would not have been allowed to enter its gates if she had lived. I am glad to be reconciled to my mother, but she asks too much, and I don't want her settlements. You see, too, how Basil feels about it."

"Don't you think there is another person to be consulted? Little Miss Olga appears to me to be a remarkably clear-headed young lady, and you must remember the advantage it would be to her to grow up at Woodside."

"I can support her decently myself, and she is quite happy and safe with me."

"Then, too," went on Mr. Marshall,

ignoring the interruption, "your mother cannot bear her out of her sight."

"Oh, very well, have Olga in, if you like," with a resigned shrug. "Not that it will change anything."

Basil went to fetch her, scowling blackly at Mr. Marshall's neat gray head as he passed him, and came back with a happier look, and his arm around the little girl's shoulders.

"Well, Miss Olga, we want to consult you about family plans," began the lawyer blandly. "How would you like to go back with Mrs. Ford to America, and live with her there on a beautiful big place in the country? And your father, and Basil, too, of course," he added hastily, as the child moved with a startled look to her father's side.

"What do father and Basil say?"

"They don't altogether fancy the idea, just at first, but I am depending on you to persuade them."

This with his best professional smile, which made, however, very little impression on Olga.

"And if we don't go, grandmother will be quite alone?"

"Unquestionably."

"Father, dear, that seems rather desolate for her. You see, she likes having me with her, I think, and Sarah says so, too. I sit beside her and stroke her poor hand, and tell her about you and mother, and what funny times we had traveling in Hungary, and she looks so pleased. Of course, you come first, dear, and after you, Basil, but I should like to be a comfort to grandmother, too. Wouldn't you like living at Woodside? Sarah has been telling me all about it, such beautiful trees, and lawns, and in one place a view of the sea. Oh, I know grandmother has been very unkind to you, but she would say she was sorry now, if she could, I'm sure. And oh, father, darling, I should so love to have some dogs, and a garden!"

Jack drew her into his arms with a sudden passionate gesture, and looked at Basil over her head, his lip quivering.

"As that is the first time in her life that Olga has ever asked for anything for herself, I think we will consider the matter settled," he said.



A Touch of Pathos

By Wallace Irwin

ILLUSTRATED BY H. MAYER

BY the frothy, flowing tide
Once a sailor lad I spied
Wiping teardrops from his eye
With the corner of his tie.

"Sailor lad, beside the sea,
Why dost weep so bitterlee?"
"Oh, kind sir!" replied the lad,
"I am thinking of my dad.

"Seven years he's been away
Sailing many a foreign bay;
Seven years of sun and rain,
Seven years of joy and pain."

Soft I stroked his sunny hair,
"That's too bad, but don't you care."
Still he sobbed with head reversed:
"Wait until you hear the worst.

"Seven years our mother good
Earned our food, and rent, and wood;
Washed, and ironed, and starched, and sich,
For the wicked, idle rich.

"Kept us all in cake and cider—
Mother's been a good provider;
Meeting poverty with song,
She's been merry all day long.

"Never getting ill or faint—
Nary querulous complaint.
Nothing harsh did mother say,
Till she got the news to-day."

Looking sadly o'er the tide,
Bitterly the urchin cried.
Ah, so long and hopelessly,
I, too, wept in sympathy.

"I am sorry, little lad—
Seven years without your dad!
Maybe he'll come back." "Oh, slush!"
Cried the youngster. "Can that gush!"

"That's what's hurtin' me and ma—
We just got a wire from pa,
Sent collect, ten cents per word,
Saying: 'Coming on the third.'"

Here the child began to snuff,
Catching teardrops on his cuff.
"That's the straw from off the stack,
Which has broke the camel's back.

"We can stand a-bein' poor,
Loneliness we can endure;
But there's one place me and ma
Draws the line—we can't stand pa!"



THE LEADING of THOMAS BRUEN

CHAPTER I.

TOM BRUEN thrust his hands deep in his pockets and settled back in the big leather chair. His quarters were, after all, rather comfortable, though he vaguely missed the homelike atmosphere that had characterized them when his mother was living. Perhaps it was Roger Montfort, his roommate, that made the difference. Roger was certainly, in his bigness and bluntness, the very opposite of the little lady whose patrician bearing and gentle manner had made the atmosphere of the little home. Luxurious to an un-English degree this, the library, showed the cultivated tastes and unostentatious wealth of those who had owned it, living quietly in the London suburb, undisturbed by panics or the rise and fall of nations and their money markets. Tom Bruen sighed, and whistled to cover the sigh.

"I don't know what's come over me," he said half apologetically. "It must be wanderlust, but whatever it is it's got me and I'm going."

"Oh, come now," the Englishman protested. "What's the use of breaking this all up? We've been together two years, and I, for one, fancy it jolly well."

"I haven't anything to say, against that, old man," Bruen said affectionately. "We've been everything to each other ever since we left Oxford, but I feel like a rudderless boat over here alone. I had a notion I'd get over it in time—but I don't."

"Bally rot!" his friend expostulated. "You're a bit down in the mouth today, that's all. You have a thousand friends, and you know it. You have been practically an Englishman ever since your grandfather came over as

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ambassador and brought your mother and your infant self. It's fate, it is a return to your own. Your people were English three hundred years ago."

"Just yesterday, as it were," Bruen smiled ruefully. "I wish they had never left England, but they did, and I am American. Old Obadiah went over to America in sixteen hundred and forty. When you fellows have spoken of each other's lines, I have always been glad that the Bruens go back to twelve hundred and thirty, and the distaff side goes through the French kings to the beginning of time, but I am not really English, you know."

His friend smoked moodily, pacing restlessly up and down across the rug, his ruddy English face distressed and frowning.

"You'll bolt the whole thing just for a fancy," he complained. "Just a rum notion that won't last a month. You can travel where you please, so why not run over to the Continent with me, this spring, or anywhere else save this wild new country you pine for?"

"It isn't the travel," Bruen answered quietly. "Mother and I traveled. It's because it's my native land that I want to go. Mother could not think of going back, she was so crushed by my father's death, but I have no memories or associations to make it anything but a delightful prospect."

Montfort picked up a book, examined its title, and tossed it noisily on the table.

"Carry out your wild plans," he said bitterly. "But leave a hole to crawl into, for it won't be a fortnight before you will be with us again."

Bruen shook his head.

"It's rather sudden, I fancy," he acknowledged. "But it is settled. I have relatives in California, so I shall go there without notifying any one of them of my coming. You see"—he laughed—"if they do not please me, I can turn about and come home."

"Home!" cried Montfort more cheerfully. "Good old chap! I repeat, you will be back in a fortnight."

"Fortnight!" Bruen laughed. "From Liverpool to California and back in fourteen days! Come, old man, it's clear you're English."

"Leave the quarters as they are to come back to, don't you know?"

"No, I am going to burn my bridges. If you and Henderson want to back it, you're welcome to buy me out. I am going to take only those heirlooms that large families have permitted to descend to me, and such things as I associate with mother or my grandfather. That's all."

"American loyalty," growled Montfort. "Friends are nothing."

"I can't talk about that," Bruen said gently. "You have been more than a brother, and I love England so dearly that the mere thought of leaving it kept me awake all night, but America is my home. I didn't realize it until yesterday at the Navy Club," he went on. "That American fellow Miller was there, you know, and I watched him. He is highly educated, and a gentleman, but he is popular in all classes because of a certain magnetism hard to describe. We, over here, cannot afford to con-

descend for fear of losing our dignity, but nobody thinks the worse of him because he stops to chat a bit with a cabby."

"Americans have no social distinctions."

"There's where you are wrong," Bruen said quickly. "They may not talk as much about it, but they are as strict as we—that is, as you are—except in the new West, where fraternizing is obligatory. No, it isn't that. It is simply possible and pleasant to an American, that's all, and I like it. He made me feel as though I belonged in a novel of Thackeray's when he had to explain that 'gumption' means the ability to find a way out of a difficulty."

"American slang is astoundingly vulgar," Montfort said scornfully. "I do not pretend to comprehend it, nor care to."

"Some of those slang expressions were brought over from this very city, I understand," Bruen said musingly. "They are many of them as old as Chaucer. We don't speak like Chaucer over here, but I noticed Miller's eyes twinkle every time you said 'bally rot' or 'beastly cold.' At any rate, I do not want to be an expatriate, and I am going back. Miller made me realize that I am growing English, but it isn't a new idea with me, and I want to go back and practice dropping my final g's in the American way before I fall into the English way of dropping my h's."

There was a howl of protest from the young Englishmen, his friends, when the inflexibility of his purpose became known. They could not understand his mad freak, and, when they found expostulation futile, they looked at one another and shrugged expressively. After all, Bruen was an American, and Americans were unaccountable. The country, raw and uncivilized, could not long hold a young man of Bruen's mettle, however, and it would not be long before he was one of them again, a wiser man. This was Bob Henderson's idea, and it was adopted with great relief by them all. With this in their minds, they could really enjoy the farewell spread and go up to Liverpool

for a day or so to see him off with a cheerfulness not entirely simulated.

They were not a very jolly party on the wharf, and it gave Bruen an unacknowledged pang to realize that he was cutting loose from them all for what was, after all, a mere whim. Most of them he had known at college, and all of them had been his cronies for years. Montfort he had played with as a child, roomed with at Oxford, and dwelt with, heart and soul, ever since. It was like pulling something out of his heart by the roots to go, but he felt, though he kept it to himself, that he could not remain and be like them, a thorough Englishman. The man Miller had shown him a real, live, hearty American, and he was resolved to be his imitator. Perhaps in the free air of the States one could learn the swinging stride and forget the unhurried amble of his English cousins. Perhaps one might learn the liberal point of view that believed in the brotherhood of man as an actuality.

Looking down at his friends from the deck, too far away for easy conversation, he wondered what young Americans would think of their sedate demeanor. Miller had that exuberant joy in living that Bruen himself felt, but these others were strangers to. The rather ponderous dignity of their farewell made him feel an odd lack. Perhaps the feeling it was not new, but just the realization of it. It was that that was at the bottom of his wanting to go.

"When you arrive and are not charmed, turn around and come back on this very steamer," Henderson called to him. "Just send us a cable, and we will all run up to meet you, standing here as we are to-day."

Bruen waved his hat and smiled. They were moving away from the dock, and his voice could not reach his friends. He stood by the rail watching them recede and grow too small for easy recognition in the crowd now dispersing, the lump in his throat making him almost ashamed of himself. He was so alone in the hurrying company of passengers on deck.

"Watch out!" a distracted nursemaid cried to her charge, an obstreperous small boy. "Don't touch the pail or you'll upset it!"

Bruen did not turn to see the possible catastrophe averted, but repeated the words with an odd smile not devoid of pathos. His mother had been wont to say "upset" instead of "overset" and "watch out" in place of "have a care," and had been so amused at his picking up the English phrases at school. Now he should practice the American ones every chance he had until people forgot he had been away from home.

Nearly thirty years before he had come, a babe in arms, out of the West with his mother and his distinguished grandfather. His father had just died, and it was thought a change of scene would benefit the little lady who was so crushed by her loss. They had lived quietly at first, but in time they had been drawn into many social affairs, and finally into a charming circle of influential friends. It was all so quiet, so dignified, so delightful, that they had remained even after the grandfather had died. All his young manhood had been passed with English companions, for his mother did not try to introduce young Americans into their exclusive circle after one or two quite embarrassing experiences, and the older ones made slight impression on his young, light-hearted spirits.

What would it be like, this land of his, the place where he belonged? Would he be homesick and lonely and wish he were back again, or would he find his mother's people altogether desirable? There were not many of them, he knew—an aunt or two, with their husbands and families, a great-uncle, and several cousins who had described themselves to him as "rattling round in the box." His father had left no one but an uncle, who had since died, and a cousin, who was living in the Philippines. As the grandson of the great ambassador, he knew they expected wonderful things of him, but when he "took stock"—to quote the American Miller—of himself, what was there? Six feet of good bone and muscle, broad

shoulders, thick, brown hair, an awkward gait, an assured manner, the average brain. Anything else? He cudged his wits to find something else to add to the list, but he could not be certain of anything save that he was quick to act, which might or might not be an excellent thing. Oh, well——

The shores of England were dimmer to his sight now, and it was not alone because the distance was growing greater. After all, to what was he going that he could bring himself to relinquish all the good things of his English home? He had known no other, and yet he was leaving it all behind—for a sentimental notion.

The steward touched him on the shoulder, and he turned away from the rail to go below with a heavy heart that recognized only what he was parting with, and was not at all certain but that he would turn about and come back to take Henderson's place as roommate to good old Roger Montfort.

CHAPTER II.

The through train from New York swung over the hills and down into the soft valleys with a light load. It was too early for the summer migration, and the few passengers were business men or foreign tourists, whose delight in the scenery kept them in the observation car all the way. There Tom Bruen had asked questions faster than they could be answered, and had stored away information that might stand him in good stead some day. He had a strong sense of proprietorship in the land over which he was traveling at a surprising speed, a concentrated patriotism that made him wonder at the quiet manner of his fellow travelers. Of course, abroad, one did not often see the better class of Americans, so usual were those who were blatantly free and equal, but for the first time in his life he realized the spirit that, untrained and uneducated, made these people obnoxious. The gentlefolk made no expression of it, but they felt it, nevertheless, as he did, the great, free joy that the breezes seemed to bring to one's

soul. This was one of the oldest portions of America, and yet the hills were wooded, the valleys dotted only now and then by the little farmhouses that seemed so far apart.

"We are due at Runyon now," his neighbor told him. "We don't stop, but I want you to notice particularly the town as a whole, for it is such a fine example of one of our best villages. The people there all trace their families back to Noah. Why, I remember making that town back in the eighties, when my territory was all East, and being waited on by a bell hop who was descended from Elder Brewster and a near relative of all the nobility of England. It's a queer land, this. Hello! What are the brakes for? Something's wrong, but I hope to goodness it does not delay us."

The train, with much complaining and unnecessary or unwelcome jolting, came to an abrupt stop a little before the station was reached, and in a moment protesting passengers made confusion. The porter, coming back from a tour of investigation, was inclined to consider them unreasonable, and unburdened his mind to Bruen.

"Suttinly makes me tyud," he growled. "Hyuh we got held up by a wreck of a freight, and all this hyuh crowd ain't got sense nuff to be plum thankful. Pears to me Ah'd be glad Ah'd been stopped short o' bein' thrown plum into kingdom come. It suttinly do."

"Wreck, eh?" Bruen said musingly. "Well, it makes little matter to me, but I wonder how long it will be before we go on."

He swung himself to the station platform, and walked forward to see the trouble. There was a crowd about the great mass of debris, and the village fire engine was noisily busy throwing water on the flames of the car that had caught fire from the heater in the diner. Looking about over the excited people, the hurrying train crews, and the heterogeneous mass that was the wreck, his eye rested in relief on the cool, green hills beyond. The train had come to a standstill on a hill, and the view beyond



"All of two hours," he said curtly. "Just my cursed luck."

and below was one of the finest for peaceful beauty that Bruen had ever seen. The lines of white houses through the valley rose with the hills, and a red barn or slate roof added the touch of color that, against the hills, made a picture for an artist. Bruen turned from watching the wreckers working feverishly to clear the tracks, and seized the nervous conductor by the sleeve.

"One moment, my man," he said. "Can you give me any idea of the length of time necessary to remove this debris, don't you know?"

The conductor shook himself loose, and regarded the English cut of Bruen's overcoat with disfavor.

"All of two hours," he said curtly. "Just my cursed luck." And walked away.

Bruen stood looking after him, conscious of having been un-American. Americans did not say "my man," but what the dickens did they say? He shrugged his shoulders, looked at his watch, and, pausing a moment to locate the station for his return, strode off to the village.

He was a splendid walker, but the hills bothered him. As he came down from the station, looking eagerly from left to right, he was conscious of the strain of the descent and tried to lessen it by imitating the gait of those who

passed him, plunging along with a rapid awkwardness entirely absent on the flat road of the valley. It was another thing to be learned by constant imitation, but he put the beginning off, uncertain whether California were hilly or flat.

So, Runyon, busy about its own affairs, but taking time to go up to the station to see the wreck, passed the young stranger on King's Road, and smiled to itself at his frank foreignness. Most travelers tried to pass as natives, or at least as wise to Runyon traditions, even though they stayed but the day, and here was a young man in a coat of odd cut, who minded not in the least that they recognized him as an alien. His very evident delight in the town was flattering, and might be profitable to an enterprising individual. Regarding himself as such an one, Old Johnny Purcell drove the "ark" to the edge of the sidewalk and solicited patronage. Old Johnny was a town celebrity, and his ark was never expected to outlast a tour of the town, but Bruen did not know that. When the cabman hailed him he accepted the suggestion in dread of the wearying hills, and imbibed all the information that Old Johnny Purcell delighted to impart.

"The white stun house is Lawyer Hubbard's," the monotonous voice assured him. "One of our oldest families. Below, you see Doctor Cobb's, him as is sent for to Frisco for lungs and heart, though blind as a bat. Yes, sir, thought that'd get you. Blind he is, but with four sons with as good eyes as me or you. Over there is Vane's. Old man Vane he left nothing much but debts to his boys when he up and died, but they're gettin' on their feet. Yes, sir. Jack, he's first rate, but Paul, he's got sort o' discontented like long o' goin' down to 'York too frequent for his own good. Yonder's the First Presbyterian Church. Fine old buildin', eh? Well, sir, my ancestors built it in sixteen hundred and eighty-nine. Yes, sir, and had sittin's square in front the pulpit where they dassn't go to sleep. There's a new roof to it, o' course, and a new steeple, but it's the same inside.

"We ain't time to go up to the cem'-

try, but you c'n see the stuns through the trees. We take pride in it, all right, and they've got the records in the safe over to the courthouse. There ain't scarce a year but what somebody come rushin' here from somewheres what ain't kep' track o' their folks and wants to look 'em up now they're dead and safe, so's to join some fighters' union or other. There's the new courthouse. We put that up in seventy-four, and there ain't a sightlier one this side the globe. The soldiers' monnymint in front has got the names of thirty-seven Purcells in six wars, countin' the Indian. My name's Purcell, sir.

"The post office ain't such a grand buildin', but jes' wait. We got some infloence up to Washington, and next time you come by we'll show you what's what in post offices. My sister she's been postmistress for twenty-three years, and there ain't a soul more methodic. Sometimes we get a sight o' mail there, and then she gets Paul Vane to help a bit. He's over to the express office, but he's awful kind-hearted, I'll say that for him, and when Martha's sick or right rushed he's real willin' to help out. I tell him it's 'count of the picture postals that come so numerous and is always so sorter interestin' to read that I sometimes do it myself when it ain't train time, and I drop in to see my sister.

"There's lots more to show, but that's the town clock strikin', and you said you had to go on the hour. I'll drop you here, I guess. My old nag is sort of beat, and you won't mind walkin' a square up to the station. Dollar, sir. Good-by, glad to 'a' met up with you. Giddap, Togo."

There were many things Bruen preferred to climbing the slope to the station, but he made no protest, though he wondered whether it were the aristocratic individual's usual custom to drop his patrons wherever the horse happened to grow weary. The price of the tour, including the lecture, had not been great, however, even allowing for the numerous delays incident to investigations of the rear wheel, the step, or the harness, and the young stranger was in

a pleasant humor. He had wondered about the propriety of a tip, and had settled the matter, or had it settled for him, when he attempted to overpay.

"Offered me half dollar too much," Purcell chuckled to his sister. "But I'm on to them flimflam tricks, and guv it back. Charged him a dollar, and got it, too. Them English fellers beat us Yanks whenever they gets a chance, so I soaked him for double. Held my breath till I got it, by jinks!"

Bruen walked slowly, very slowly, up the hill, glancing back now and again at the pretty village, and occasionally making sure that his train was still waiting for the clearing of the wreckage. Once he stopped to rest on the low stone wall built of boulders. From that point he could see all over the valley to the distant hills, and nearer glimpsed a little river flowing quietly by. His attention attracted by a gopher in the wall, he poked with his knife between the stones, looking at first for a chance acorn, and then poking in mere curiosity to discover what held the stones together. Loose, tiny pebbles, undisturbed for two generations, flew into the road, and with them a something round, and yellow, and heavy. Bruen regarded it idly as it lay in the road dust, and then rose and picked it up. Cleared of its dust, he held it in his palm—a gold locket of the workmanship of many years before.

On the front there was a raised design of a ring encircling a bird on the wing, on the back a large monogram of three letters, almost impossible to read. The marks of tiny teeth on the smooth edge seemed to indicate that the gopher had found it too hard a nut for his cracking after he had carried it home. Bruen turned it over and over as he walked along, resolved to surrender it to the station master when the through train was free to go on. As he examined it he happened on the spring, and the cover, with its bird, opened in his hand. In all his after life he never forgot the shock of that moment.

There was a photograph inside, and he turned it to the light, curious to know whether it was of a man, woman,

or child. What he saw in the late sunshine made him stop short with a hasty exclamation, his eyes wide with astonishment. At first glance he almost recognized himself, but a second, more earnest inspection proved it to be a likeness of his father as a young man. It was unbelievable that mere chance had brought it to his hands in that way, and yet he knew of many a coincidence as hard to credit.

His mother had often spoken of "leadings" or open doors—perhaps the whole trip, the accident, the tired horse, had all been leading to his finding the little trinket in the wall. What would follow? What was it doing in Runyon, hundreds of miles away from any of his father's early haunts, separated by a continent from the only relatives he owned? His father as a boy lived in New Jersey, though his family was of New York, but he had gone to college in Connecticut, and was still a young man when he went to California, where he met his wife. Vacations during his college course had been passed in many places, among them Virginia and other Southern States. Where did that person know him, and why should the locket fall by some odd stroke of fate into the hands of his son?

Bruen was not superstitious, but he thought he saw what might prove an entertaining experience, and he made up his mind that California could wait at least overnight. Hasty investigation showed he had time to make the change in his plans, and he set to work to get his possessions together. Some little trouble there was securing his trunk. "It was irregular, never allowed, no one ever heard of such a thing," they said, but it was finally accomplished, and he found himself saying good-by to the man who had told him of Runyon.

"Told you it was a fine town," was the puzzled response to his announcement. "But I never dreamed they would get you so easy. Well, whatever made you change your mind, good luck to you."

"He ain' look to me like a shifty man," the porter said, as he picked up his step and swung on the moving car.

"He suttinly 'peared like a twin to a gen'leman, but he shuh mus'n't cahr a heap fo' money ef he's jes' nachully willin' to fohfuit his 'teecket thataway. I do' know. I ain' on'erstandin' the ways o' milyunaires, no, sir. And hyuh we's three houahs late pullin' out. Oh, lawdy!"

As the train puffed away, impatient to make up for its long idleness, Bruen stood watching it from the midst of his small pile of baggage for a moment, and then with a short laugh raised his finger and whistled to an expressman. Once more a mere whim had turned the current of his life for better or worse.

CHAPTER III.

The hotel was not the most luxurious in Bruen's experience, but comfortable enough. So interested was he in adjusting himself to his new quarters, and in observing everything and everybody, that he did not realize the attention he attracted among the small company of guests. The waiters and bell boys, none too active at best, were quick to note his slightest need, and the traveling men commented on his clothes, his walk, and his assured manner. Men who had been places were not common in Runyon, but in the smoking room it was not so much where he had traveled as what his line was that interested them. Bruen was not inclined to discuss his private affairs with them, and met their frank curiosity with an equally frank but courteous reserve.

"I'm making Columbus to-morrow," one large, red-faced man told him. "Ain't I seen you there last season? Seems like I did."

"I have never been there," Bruen said politely. "Let me see, in Iowa, isn't it? I'm slightly rusty in my geography."

"Rusty! Well, I guess!" roared the new acquaintance. "What's your line? P'fume?"

Bruen looked puzzled. "I beg pardon?"

"S all right; no offense. Thought you was more like a vender of p'fum'ry than a shoeman. Hello, Burke! Put it there, old sawed-off, how's the kiddy?"

Bruen went up to his "suite," followed by considerable amused comment.

"English? Gee, so English as never was!" Burke's crony told him with a guffaw. "Didn't drop his h's, but, gee whiz, he ain't got an idea of America. Bet he's a forger or something like it, he's so sort of plain and simple. Those kind is dangerous. How's things down in Illinois?"

Bruen, trying hard to be very American, kept yet his English habits, so, being in uncertainty, his mind turned for aid to a solicitor. An Englishman does little or nothing in the least radical without the aid of his family lawyer, so Bruen decided that a solicitor would be of great assistance to him in unraveling the mystery of the locket and finding the loser of it. The hotel people would talk, an attorney would hold his peace. The finding of the locket had strangely upset him, and feeling, as he did, that he was walking in a dream, he longed for the steady head of some one less dazed and mystified. In an odd way the appearance of "Lawyer Hubbard's" house, as noted in his drive, impressed him as being inspiring, and so, at what he considered an early business hour, he inquired his way to the lawyer's office.

Vincent Hubbard, who had been at his desk two hours when Bruen's card was brought in, was a quiet man of an inconspicuousness that was most marked. Small, dun-colored, and devoid of any mannerism that attracted attention, he was a negligible quantity until he raised his head and looked at a man with his brilliant black eyes. His sandy hair and blond complexion so little prepared one for the surprise that he might well start and have difficulty stifling an exclamation. To the heart of an evil-doer those eyes might strike terror, but to friend and family their gentleness was most winning.

He turned the card over in his hand, and frowned in an endeavor to remember any one he might one day have known and called by the name of Bruen. He had not long to ponder the matter, however, for the card was quickly followed by a young man in a dark-blue

suit and a most peculiar overcoat. Mr. Hubbard did not recognize it as English, but realized it was not New York. They shook hands.

"I'm here on an odd mission," Bruen began, with awkward abruptness. "I was to have gone through yesterday, but the wreck kept me just long enough to permit me to rearrange my plans. I secured my luggage by pleading my foreignness, and stopped at the Grand Hotel. I have many letters to men in New York and various places in California, and others, unaddressed, from persons of some importance in London. I am just recently from England."

Mr. Hubbard played with a paper knife, listening courteously and making his own estimate of the man as his caller talked on.

"I am not English, however," Bruen said hastily. "We are Americans who have lived in England for a generation. I have come back in order to know something of my countrymen. My grandfather was Cary Van Rensselaer Bruen."

This was one of the names one always spoke with pride, that of an American of whom all Americans boasted, and the lawyer's eyes were gentle when he looked up at the young man and smiled.

"An honorable distinction," he said. "I congratulate you."

"Thank you. I don't know that you can understand what it has meant to me to be so ignorant regarding the country that gave us birth, or how I have longed to be American myself, but it was so with me. As my mother's people are of California, I made that State my destination. I purchased a ticket to Chicago on the express, and stopped here only because the wreck kept me. An individual on the observation car considered Runyon worthy of notice, so, when I saw they wouldn't get the goods train off the track for some hours, I drove about with an entertaining old cove for a cabby."

"Purcell!" the lawyer said, with an unexpected chuckle. "Yes?"

"Returning, I was disembarked at the base of the hill, and found the ascent

a great bore, don't you know. Resting on the bowlders, I found a thing that made me feel, on my word, as if I had suddenly taken leave of my senses, you understand. It was a locket, a sort of trinket, and I remained in Runyon with my luggage."

He laid a pile of official-looking letters on the desk and put the locket beside them. Mr. Hubbard picked up the locket and looked at it critically.

"Such as were the fashion forty years ago," he said musingly. "Yet this is untarnished, and was recently lost. Have you any associations with such a thing?"

"No, sir. My theory leads me to the belief that it was lost on the hillside and carried to the bowlders by a small creature I saw there running to its hole. Something like a rat it was."

"Very plausible, because of the marks of small teeth."

It was evident that the older man did not see the connection between the locket and the abandoned journey. Bruen leaned over, and, touching the spring, laid the open locket back in the lawyer's hand, his eyes intent on his face. Mr. Hubbard glanced sharply from the small photograph to the young man and back again, frowning slightly.

"It might be yourself," he said, "were it not for the cut of the hair and the old-style clothes. A relative?"

Bruen nodded.

"Yes, sir," he said. "My father."

The lawyer raised his eyebrows in astonishment.

"Your father! I don't wonder that you stayed here. I have heard of many coincidences, but none more remarkable than that. Your father! Then he had friends or relatives in Runyon?"

"That is my reason for stopping," Bruen told him seriously. "I wanted to know who there is in Runyon that cares enough for my father's memory to wear his picture in a locket forty long years."

The lawyer leaned back in his chair and considered the ceiling thoughtfully.

"There is no Bruen in the State that I know of," he said slowly. "Nor are there any here who have intermarried with your family. I am in a position to speak with authority," he added mod-



Bruen leaned over, and, touching the spring, laid the open locket back in the lawyer's hand.

estly, "because I happen to have written a few genealogical books, and am at present president of the New England Genealogical Society. I am not surprised at your wishing to remain here, for this promises to be an interesting and possibly entertaining investigation."

"I believe so," Bruen said, with some eagerness. "And, believing it, I have come to you as my solicitor. I shall be glad——"

At that moment the door swung open, and a young woman in a great hurry began to speak without a glance at the man whom the door half hid.

"Oh, father, I'm so hungry! It's long past twelve, and you must come home. I've been up at the wreck all the morning, and it's perfectly terrible. Jack says Mrs. Flynn's Tim won't live, he's so——"

Something in her father's expression gave her pause, and she saw Bruen for the first time. As the two men rose her face flushed very pink. Bruen had time to note that she was all in brown, even to her hair and eyes, before he acknowledged the introduction.

"Nelly, this is Mr. Bruen," her father said. "A stranger, delayed by the wreck until he became interested in our town and decided to stay here for a while."

The young woman put her hand frankly into Bruen's, and smiled boyishly. She had very bright eyes, softer than her father's.

"I owe you both an apology," she said. "I did not know there was any one here. Nobody does any business in Runyon in the noon hour. You see, we're so old-fashioned. I'll go right away again."

"No, if you please," Bruen protested. "It is time I went, for I have jolly well wasted Mr. Hubbard's time already. I have much to see to myself, for I fancy my luggage is still reposing in the hotel lift awaiting my return."

"I think you are the very first Englishman to come to Runyon since the Revolution," the girl said, smiling. "We are not a show place. I hope you'll like it."

"Thanks. But what made you think me English?" he asked, reddening. "I have practiced being American for three whole weeks."

"I suppose it is partly your coat," she said hesitatingly. "And partly your

—well, what you say. You see, we don't say 'lift' and 'luggage' and things like that."

Bruen laughed.

"I do so want to reform," he said ruefully. "I think I shall have to engage an instructor. But first I shall dispose of my topcoat."

"There you are again," she laughed. "It's an overcoat in our land, you see."

"Thank you. I'll try to remember."

The girl's father was examining Bruen's letters, so, naturally, there was nothing he could do but wait, no matter how much he might wish to hasten away. The girl herself sank into a big leather chair, and motioned him to another one close at hand.

"I was abroad once," she said wistfully. "But it was one of those rush trips where you get a bite of London, and a nibble of Paris, and whiff the smoke of Glasgow in passing, so it was merely an aggravation. I learned Baedeker by heart, but I want to know things that are not guidebook things. Such as whether an Englishman really calls red pink, and whether they really live on roast beef and buns."

Bruen laughed again.

"Those are the things I know. I find I am ignorant of everything American. I purchased this in a bookstall last evening."

"This" was a small geography, with a corner turned down at the page headed: "Review Questions and Answers."

"What a good idea! Why, how small a place our publishers give to your native country—two pages! Isn't that American?"

"My native country is as large as yours," he told her proudly. "I am an American brought up abroad."

"Why, you don't seem a bit like that sort!" she exclaimed—and bit her lip. "I beg your pardon!"

"Don't, please. I understand. We weren't that kind. Maybe some time I'll tell you about it. That seems to me to be an excellent textbook. I flatter myself I showed—er—showed considerable gumption."

Her ringing laugh astonished him.

"Where, oh, where, did you find 'con-

siderable gumption'?" she gasped. "If that isn't too funny for anything!"

"Funny?" he asked, puzzled. "I prided myself on having learned an excellent Americanism. I picked it up at the Navy Club. Possibly I used it incorrectly?"

"No, no, it wasn't that. It was just that you acted as if you had a fire-cracker in your hand that was fizzing and might go off. You certainly need an instructor."

"Perhaps you'll help me?" Bruen asked boldly. "If your father is satisfied with my letters, I'd like sometime to tell you how I came to be so ignorant."

Mr. Hubbard was tying the bit of English tape about the letters, and spoke without looking up. Whatever he had read, he did not tell, not even to his daughter, when she got him alone and tried to perform the operation known as "pumping." Vincent Hubbard believed in letting a man tell his own affairs if he cared to have them known.

"Perhaps Mr. Bruen will come up to tea with us this evening, Nelly," he suggested. "That will let you have an opportunity to help him feel more at home among us."

Bruen was pleased to accept the invitation with humble gratitude, and rose to pick up his papers and the old-fashioned locket. Already he was beginning to feel less strange—more American, perhaps.

"We shall see you, then, at seven?" the girl said cordially. "We are a quiet village, Mr. Bruen, but there are not many prettier places in summer. It is almost June now."

Bruen paused in the doorway a moment, looking back at the pleasant picture in the sunlit room. The girl in the shades of brown, the middle-aged man with his patrician air and kindly smile—it was all so wholesome. He answered her gayly.

"It is getting warmer," he said. "About time to shed my topcoat, anyhow."

And, before the door closed on her merry laugh, he heard the warning:

"Overcoat, Mr. Bruen, overcoat! You must not forget!"

CHAPTER IV.

The instructorship with which Helen Hubbard had invested herself bade fair to be a serious matter. Neither of them had ever realized the great number of small differences between the sister languages, and it seemed almost a hopeless task sometimes.

"You will insist on saying somebody 'came a nasty cropper,'" she reminded him. "Or, perhaps, that something is 'ripping good,' and it does not sound a bit like president's English, though it may be the king's."

"I fancy—think, I mean, that his majesty does not often use that particular style," he laughed. "Let's go for a row now."

"You have just the same final sort of way of ending a discussion that father has," she said. "I thought it was peculiar to lawyers."

"I was reading law in London," he declared, with a laugh. "Partly for the sake of being busy."

"So you are something?" she asked in a relieved tone. "I told Jack Vane I thought you were."

"What did that gentleman say, may I ask?"

"Well, he—he thought you—you weren't, you know," she stammered. "He said you just sort of idled around without any job. I thought so, too, and didn't like it at first, but after I knew you—"

"You liked it better? Thank you. If I thought your father would let me read law in his office, I should be so glad. Do you suppose—"

"Oh, it would be nice. You'll feel better, for you know all the fellows do something," she told him eagerly. "You wouldn't feel comfortable here otherwise. But father couldn't afford an assistant, or even a clerk. All he has is a boy, who comes in after school hours and at rush times."

She looked so downcast that he laughed.

"Salary no object," he said. "For the privilege of using his library I'd be thankful to act as clerk for him. You see, I am really very ignorant in American law, and would be like a green hand in such a billet. I shall ask him this evening. Come, please, let's go for that row. The ever-present Vane will be here this evening, and I won't have a show."

Bruen had a sense of humor, and yet he persuaded himself that it was his desire to know more of Americans in general, instead of one in particular, that made him willing to postpone California indefinitely and stay in the little hill town. A traveler's duty always included a solemn obligation to "study the natives," and sometimes it was vastly entertaining.

He had already realized his being a man of leisure was not regarded with favor by the people he met, and he recognized the prejudice as just. Mr. Hubbard, he felt, liked him better for his willingness to be busy, and he was, on the whole, more satisfied with himself when he had definite duties to perform. The office work at first was extremely light, but, after a time, Mr. Hubbard left more and more for him until he was a busy individual, and liked it. He had inherited a love for business, and the hours were not so long that he was unable to enjoy himself. To the great discomfiture of one Jack Vane, Bruen was a welcome guest at the Hubbard home, where Helen kept house for her father, and many were the good times he enjoyed there.

The mystery of the locket, of which he soon told the lawyer's daughter, was a source of constant wonderment and speculation to all three of them. Bruen wore the bit of jewelry on his watch fob, in the hope of its being recognized and claimed, but no one gave it a second glance. Advertising in the columns of the *Runyon Bugle* and in those of metropolitan dailies brought no results, and Bruen confessed himself puzzled.

"It might, of course, have been lost by some drummer passing through here, so I shall still hope," he said. "I think I shall stay here a bit longer to see

what may turn up, particularly as I am much interested already."

Helen flushed.

"Father says you have shown great interest in your work," she said quickly. "You are a great deal better than Tim was, I am sure."

"Depending somewhat on what Tim was."

"Tim was a little Irish orphan, and the office boy. He departed with five dollars in stamps. Was that the bell? Jack Vane's coming in to-night."

"How surprising!" Bruen murmured. "Doesn't he ever go out of town?"

"No, do you?" she asked brightly. "Good evening, Jack. I thought Paul was coming with you."

"Paul's run down to New York," the young man said, with a troubled frown. "I didn't want him to, but he said he needed a change. You see, he's been doing double duty, working several weeks at the post office after express hours."

"Miss Purcell's been sick, I know."

"Yes, and the dickens of a job it is to look after that place. You see, Paul isn't at work for the express company after noon, so he's been working half days at the post office."

"Mr. Purcell seems to appreciate it," Bruen put in. "He was telling me how kind your brother is."

Vane bit his lip.

"Kind? Maybe," he said. "It doesn't seem like Paul, somehow. Oh, he's all right, but he's not usually that energetic. If it was somebody else but old Mame Purcell I'd understand, but she always looks as though she had been eating pickles. Let's have some music, Nelly."

It was the next morning that the lawyer's daughter hurried into her father's office with almost the same reckless haste she had shown three weeks before. Her cheeks were very pink when Bruen rose to place a chair for her, and her eyes shone.

"It always seems funny to me to be kept out of my own father's office by outsiders," she laughed. "This waiting in the outer office always aggravates me. Who is in there now?"

"A man."

"Dreadfully close-mouthed, aren't you?" she pouted. "You know perfectly well that he'll go out the other door, and I never shall know."

"You can ask your father when you get in there. What good fortune has come your way that makes you look so happy?"

"Do I look happy? I suppose I ought not to. I found a registered letter waiting for me at the post office, and what do you think? I have a jewelry mystery of my own, so there now!"

Bruen raised his eyebrows.

"Hear, hear!" he cried. "What did you find?"

"It isn't a find, it's a lose," she said gleefully. "An express company writes to know if I have received a package of jewelry lately."

"Why didn't they wire?" Bruen asked thoughtfully. "The mail is too slow."

"That's what I thought," she nodded. "That's the mystery. They ask me to wire blindly, and I came to get father to help me. There, is that the man going at last?"

It was, so she went in, and Bruen was summoned to follow almost at once.

"Three heads are better than two," Mr. Hubbard said. "Let's see what we make of this. Why didn't the firm telegraph?"

"There's something crooked," Bruen said, thus appealed to. "They could not trust the wires."

"They have an agent right here," Helen said. "Why couldn't they get Paul Vane to work on it?"

Bruen opened his mouth to speak, and closed it suddenly. Mr. Hubbard looked at him sharply, and spoke in his stead.

"The fewer the people who know about this the better," he said. "You know what a place like this is. Everybody is related to everybody else, and we all know when any one buys so much as a pair of shoes. If they want to know anything of this sort, the registered mail is the only recourse."

"From what place was it shipped?"

"Caryville, Virginia," Helen said. "An aunt of mine, my mother's sister,

died there some months ago, and it seems she left a will stating everything was to be mine. The lawyer wrote me about it just after she died. She did not say what the things were, so I am surprised to find them worth anything. She was always very poor."

"We'll write out the telegram at once," her father said. "Hand me those blanks, will you, Bruen? Now, how shall we word it?"

The telegram composed, Helen went away, and Bruen closed the door after bowing her out. He hesitated a moment, and then went back to the inner office.

"I beg pardon, Mr. Hubbard," he said, "but if you have no objection I should like to take a little time afterwards to ferret this matter out."

The older man did not look up.

"Very well," he said. "You think that—"

"I don't know what to think yet, sir, but I fancy my locket and Miss Hubbard's loss are not unconnected."

Mr. Hubbard shook his head.

"My sister-in-law was never out of Virginia," he said. "She could not know your father."

"Possibly not," Bruen agreed. "But there may be some one here with a fancy for collecting jewelry. Some one who prefers to remain unknown."

"Go ahead," Mr. Hubbard encouraged him. "I shall not need you much these warm afternoons if you'll give me the mornings. I don't suppose Nelly's jewelry amounts to any more than a row of pins, but, all the same, we are constitutionally opposed to losing anything we can keep. Go ahead, and good luck to you."

Bruen had no idea how he was going to go about it, but he hoped an inspiration would come to him. Common sense suggested that he go down to the express office, so he turned his steps that way. A sleepy clerk yawned in his face when he asked for the manager.

"Gone up country shootin', or fishin', or somethin'," he said. "Vane, he's gone down to N' York, and left it all to me. Vane's always handin' me a lemon. It ain't fair."

"Certainly doesn't look that way," Bruen agreed warmly. "I wanted to ask whether any package had come for Miss Hubbard."

"Ain't nothin' come in at all to-day. Gee, sometimes I think I'll quit, it's so all-fired slow in this hole."

"I like it here."

"Anybody would with your pull," the youth snickered. "Workin' for old man Hubbard an'—"

"If you will be so kind as to look over some of your records," Bruen suggested coldly. "I am anxious to know about that package."

"If it had 'a' came it would 'a' been delivered," the young man told him testily, but, nevertheless, he rose, and went through the books at a leisurely pace, pausing now and then to yawn noisily.

"May twenty-eighth this is, ain't it?" he asked. "Well, nothin' ain't come in to-day, as I told you once, nor yet yesterday. Wednesday old man Flint got some books for the lib'ry, and a bale of goods slid in for the dry-goods store. Then there was the alligator for Doctor Cobb's boy. That was the cutest ever, you bet! 'T had slats on the box, and I c'd see it wink. I ain't never seen any kind of an alligator before."

"Go on."

"Gee, what's your hurry? Then we got a small box for Myra Pinney, too valyble to send up, so she come for it. Gee, she was blushin' to beat the band! I made out she couldn't have it 'thout she described the contents, and she fell for it. She said it was a diamond ring, and opened it then and there. Gee, it was a beaut! Nothin' small about her feller, I tell you, even if he does live a long ways out with a lot of cowboys."

"Go on."

"I'm goin'. Hold your horses. Well, here's a box for Aunt Violet, and a new hat for Mrs. Harris, a carriage strap from a mail-order house for old Johnny Purcell, and a pair of shoes for Martin Allen. Gee, they was heavy! That's back a couple o' weeks, far's this here book goes."

"Get another one."

"Aw, gee, what do you take me for? Vane, he went down to N' York and



"Why, you don't seem a bit like that sort!" she exclaimed.

left the other books in the safe. Guess you got to wait till the boss gets back from up country."

Bruen rallied his forces and tried to be patient. It was somewhat trying to a man who liked to see things done well and quickly.

"How soon will the manager be home?" he asked. "Have a cigar, will you?"

"Thanks, don't mind if I do. I guess he'll be droppin' in 'long about Thursday. There ain't no reason for him to hustle, but I heard tell how Cally Stratton would be back from teachin' district school Thursday mornin'. Drop around Thursday forenoon, and he'll be here. So long. This here's a good cigar."

Nevertheless, as soon as Bruen had gone, the young man chuckled to him-

self, and demanded of his reflection in the mirror over his desk: "Why the dickens a feller had to tell everythin' he knew to them blame foreigners, anyhow?"

CHAPTER V.

Tom Bruen was walking along Main Street, deep in thought, when he came face to face with Helen Hubbard, and turned about to walk along with her.

"You are becoming a perfect sleuth," she laughed. "I had to speak to you twice before you even deigned to notice me."

"I'm afraid there's nothing sleuthy about me," he acknowledged ruefully. "I don't believe I could recognize a clew if it stood up on its hind feet and called me by name."

"You haven't given yourself time," she told him. "You can't expect to do anything so quickly."

"Apparently not, in Runyon. The manager at the express office won't be back before Thursday, Miss Purcell is sick again, Vane's gone to New York, and there isn't a pawnbroker to be found in town."

"What are you wanting to pawn?" she asked mischievously. "The famous top-coat?"

"Overcoat," he reminded her. "No, I believe that is adorning the person of the hotel barber at present."

"Must be quite warm enough!"

"Well, of course, not literally. Are you going somewhere that I may go, too?"

"Just to the jeweler's," she smiled. "Come, if you like. I am going to get Mr. Davis to mend a hatpin for me. It wasn't soldered tight enough, and broke this morning. It pays me back for getting a bargain—or what I thought was a bargain—a month ago."

The jewelry store had no customers, and it took but a moment to leave the pin and tell what was wanted. They had turned away, when Bruen caught Davis' gaze on the locket, and went back.

"You seem to recognize it," he said bluntly. "Do you know to whom it belongs?"

"I noticed it particularly because I have just been polishing up a couple of brooches with the same design," the jeweler said cautiously. "May I ask if it was your wife as sold them?"

Helen turned quickly and joined them at the repair desk, over which Bruen bent with a very red face.

"I am not married," the young man said. "Did a lady sell them to you?"

"Not to say a lady, sir, but a—person," the jeweler said. "She was well dressed, all right, if that makes a lady, but I have an idea she came from the other side the tracks. She was that sort."

In Runyon, as in many other small towns, the tracks divided the sheep from the goats, and no one who made any pretensions to being anybody

thought of living on the wrong side. The others were oftentimes honest, but even their honesty was open to suspicion.

"Would you mind describing her?"

"She was undersized, with bleached hair and rouge," the jeweler said. "She had a good many dangly things on, and a hat so much like a peach basket that I couldn't see the top of the face. She sold me the two brooches for a smaller sum because she needed the money."

"Oh, may we see them?" Helen asked eagerly. "You will let us, won't you, Mr. Davis?"

The jeweler was willing, and in a moment the two old-fashioned pins lay on the bit of velvet on the glass counter. Bruen compared them with his locket, and found the quaint pattern the same. When the jeweler excused himself to wait on a customer, Bruen suggested that she buy the pair.

"Of course, if they are stolen goods and we can prove it, Mr. Davis will have to give them up, anyway," he said. "But while I am trying to get the proof he may sell them a dozen times."

"I am afraid I can't afford it," Helen said, with some embarrassment. "They aren't pretty enough for me to want them for myself, you see."

"But you won't mind if I take them?"

"Oh, no, it may help you to find the solution of the mystery."

When Mr. Davis came back Bruen asked him if he was willing to part with the brooches.

"They match the locket so perfectly," he said, "that I should very much like to have them. What will you sell them for?"

"If I put more work on furbishing them up, they'd be worth a tenner," the jeweler said. "But so long's I haven't spent a great deal of time on them, I'm willing to let them go for half that."

Bruen agreed, and in a few minutes left the store with the pins in his pocket.

"What are you going to do with them, now you have them?" Helen laughed. "I don't see that you are any nearer the end of it than you were before."

"Maybe not," he answered absently. "But I have an idea I am beginning to

get near a clew If you'll excuse me now, I'll stop in to-night, if I may, and report."

After he left Helen he made his way to the office of the Runyon Lyceum, known as the "theayter." There was no one of authority there, but a young boy was ready with courteous replies to Bruen's questions about future performances.

"We're trying to book a show for next week," he said. "The last one played to empties, or paper houses, and the troupe had to walk ties."

"Hard enough for the men, I should imagine," Bruen sympathized. "But how on earth do the women manage?"

The young fellow shrugged his shoulders.

"Fanny Porter, the leading lady—stage name, Frances Desmond—claimed she had to sell jools, but I don't go much on that."

"She'd have to have lots of valuables to pay for railroad tickets," Bruen said, stifling a yawn. "Unless she lived near."

"She went down to N' Yawk," the boy said. "I guess I ain't so sorry for them road comp'nies as I am for us. We're out a whole pile by their going back on us. They ain't been here but a week, either. It ain't any good to hold 'em, for their costumes ain't worth ten dollars. My father's off gettin' a new show, so if you drop in again you'll have better luck. You're the fourth person this morning who's come in after tickets."

Bruen thanked him, and made his way rapidly back to Mr. Hubbard's office. Mr. Hubbard looked up as Bruen's quick step sounded on the floor and crossed the rug.

"Well, what luck?" he asked, smiling. "I see something in your face."

For answer Bruen laid the two pins on the desk, and waited for the surprise he knew his friend would show.

"Well, well!" Mr. Hubbard exclaimed. "Where on earth did you happen on these?"

"A woman, leading lady at the Lyceum, sold them to Davis," Bruen answered eagerly. "I met Miss Hubbard,

and went with her to the jeweler's on an errand of hers, and Davis spoke of the locket. It turned out that a woman had sold these to him, so I went up to the Lyceum, thinking the description sounded like that of a vaudeville actress. The lad down there volunteered the information that Miss Porter, or Desmond, sold jewelry to pay her fare to New York. I knew she must have gone a comparatively short distance, as Davis was willing to sell me the pins for five dollars, and the woman was known to have very little of her own. She would be afraid to stand out for too high a price."

"You think, then, that you have the thief?"

"By no manner of means," Bruen declared. "She has been in Runyon only a week, and it was almost a month ago that I picked up this locket. My idea is this—"

He rose and closed the door before he outlined his plan of campaign. There was no one in the outer office, but Runyon was so small a place that Bruen had acquired the habit of considering that the very walls had ears, and it was safer to be cautious.

"Some one in Runyon got that package of trinkets," Bruen said. "He or she was a friend or admirer of this vaudeville woman, and gave her the pins, which are really not of the sort such a person would care for in the least. It seems almost the act of a country boy to offer them to her. She was not a young woman, judged by her photographs in front of the Lyceum, and would probably have laughed at such a gift if she had not felt they had a certain selling quality and might pass unquestioned."

"Do you suppose the woman had more?"

"Mr. Davis told her the pins would be worth more, with the rest of the set, and she said that was all she had. She added that her mother had sold the rest—which was obviously a blind."

"Do you think you'd have any chance of finding her in New York?"

"What do you think?"

"Needle in a haystack," Mr. Hubbard

said tersely. "She's probably playing in some nickel theater under a different name by this time. They change their names with their costumes. It would be expensive business to follow her up. You see, for all we know, those were her own pins, heirlooms from her mother. We've got to find some real grounds for believing something was stolen."

"Miss Hubbard's package is missing."

"True, but we do not know that it even arrived."

"I wouldn't believe that express fellow for a minute," Bruen said rather warmly. "He was too flippant and too independent. He was probably keeping something back all the time. That sort of man thinks he shows his manhood by refusing to assist any one with information in his possession. He was in a mood to refuse anything I asked."

"He's Peter Butts," Mr. Hubbard said. "There's nothing wrong with him save an overweening pride in his own importance. When Will Prentice gets back he will shrink a bit. When did you say that happy event will be?"

"When Miss Stratton comes back from teaching school," Bruen said, smiling. "Thursday, I believe."

"Nothing escapes the people of this town," Mr. Hubbard said a bit impatiently. "It'll be a wonder if they don't spoil that pretty little romance by talking about it."

"A man wouldn't be worth while if he allowed gossips to interfere with his happiness, would he?" Bruen asked quietly. "Don't they talk about everybody in just the same way?"

"They are certainly impartial," Mr. Hubbard said, with something like a sigh. "But I get tired of it now and then. Have you looked over those bills yet?"

Bruen picked up the small pile of papers and ran through them quickly, asking a question now and then about the people concerned. The last two he drew out from the rubber band with a quick motion of sudden interest.

"Who's Mrs. Toole?" he asked. "Paul Vane seems to owe her quite a sum."

"She keeps a boarding house the other side of town. I am sorry to see Paul running into debt like his father, from whom he inherits a lazy streak."

"There are two here; one has to do with that mortgage."

"Jack's tried to carry that fellow on his back for five years," Mr. Hubbard said regretfully. "But I guess Paul has gone in too deep for him now. Paul borrowed money from Perkins, and then put a second mortgage on the old house, which really isn't worth it. Perkins never would have agreed to it if he hadn't known Jack was standing back of Paul. They don't put bills in lawyers' hands for collection until they are almost hopeless," Mr. Hubbard laughed. "So I am not counting on any of that very greatly."

"Just the same, if you'll allow me, I'll take Mrs. Toole's bill," Bruen said. "I want an excuse for an errand that will take me half an hour. I shall be back at once."

It took him less than half an hour. At the express office he was effusively welcomed by Peter Butts.

"I told you not to turn up till Thursday," that individual said. "But, anyhow, I want you to congratulate me good and plenty. See?"

Bruen shook hands, and asked the reason for such hilarity.

"I'm it," Peter Butts informed him. "I'm the whole cheese. The boss came back this noon, and was madder'n a hornet to find Vane off his job. Bounced him, all right, all right, so you see me as clerk now, and don't you forget it. Seven per, and Vane dumped in Salt Creek. Won't he be hot when he comes back, though? Ho!"

"Glad to hear you're in luck," Bruen told him heartily. "Please tell Mr. Prentice that Mr. Hubbard and I will see him at five to-day. If not convenient, let us know, please. Cigar?"

CHAPTER VI.

At five o'clock that afternoon the new express clerk at seven per placed chairs for two gentlemen in the manager's private office, and withdrew, closing the

door behind him. Unfortunately, the key was in the lock, and sounds did not penetrate the cracks, no matter how carefully one applied one's ear to them.

As soon as the clerk was gone the manager opened the large ledger before him, and ran his finger down the columns within.

"Here you are!" he cried triumphantly. "Miss Helen Hubbard, from Caryville, Virginia, May fifth. Delivered same day."

"Yes, but it wasn't," Mr. Hubbard said firmly. "Helen never got it, Will, and that's all there is to it."

Prentice turned to a file of papers on his desk, and ran through them rapidly.

"It beats all how things do go at sixes and sevens as soon as I turn my back," he sighed. "This place looks as though a cyclone had struck it. It's going to take me weeks to straighten it out."

Finally he found what he wanted, and spread it on the table before the two men with something like triumph.

"There you are, Mr. Hubbard," he said. "Signed by your daughter herself, unmistakably."

"Her name, certainly," Mr. Hubbard acknowledged. "But Helen always signs her initials on receipts."

"People often vary their usual habits," the manager said calmly. "It happened this once that she signed her whole name."

Mr. Hubbard passed the sheet over to Bruen, who took it up to examine it, and then laid it over some writing in the ledger.

"This is the actual leaf from the delivery book?" he asked. "You use no other."

"The very leaf."

"Then that signature was traced," Bruen said. "Some one traced it through the page. You can see for yourself how easily writing can be read through the semitransparent paper."

"Helen doesn't scatter her signatures about town," Mr. Hubbard said. "Where did the man get it to copy?"

"There are any number of people who might have it, if your notion is correct

—which I do not grant," the manager said. "Your hired girl, for instance, who may have taken the package, or a gardener, or any stranger who might be in town. Miss Hubbard has undoubtedly ordered many articles by mail from New York, as well as from the stores hereabouts, in writing."

"What does the company say about it?" Mr. Hubbard asked. "My daughter telegraphed them as requested."

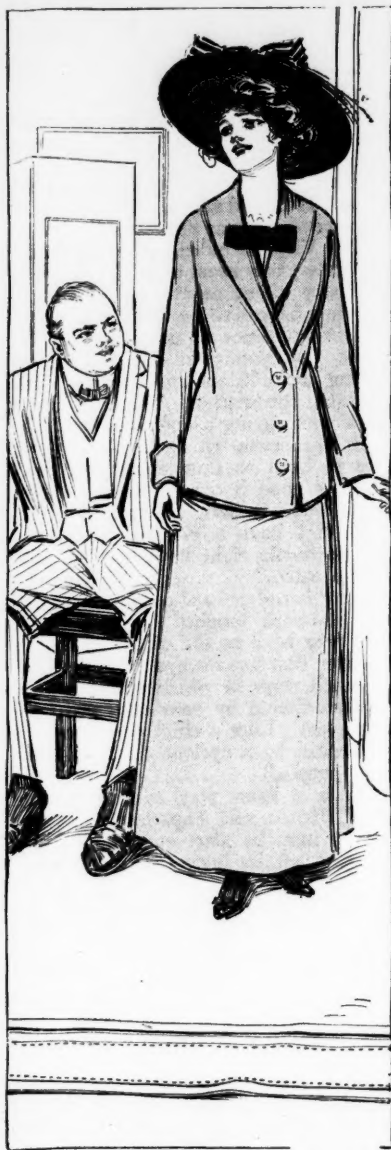
"The Virginia office is the sleepest I ever knew; they seem to think they need not hurry about anything. Nevertheless, they have written and wired about this several times in my absence. Of course, that youngster out there knew nothing about it, and nothing was done regarding the matter. This morning I had a wire saying a detective would be in on the seven-ten from New York. They've been so slow about it I can't see what good it does to send a detective at this late date. It hits me pretty hard, as I have a bid to supper, and have to hustle right back here as soon as I've eaten."

"That is rather hard on him, isn't it?" Mr. Hubbard laughed, as they made their way back to the office. "That is a matter that has always interested me, the small ways in which others are seriously affected by your own great catastrophes. Like a child crying over a toy broken by a cyclone that has killed many people."

"Such a loose way to run a business!" Bruen said impatiently. "Why can't a man be alert enough to know about his affairs instead of guessing or trusting others?"

"You'll become accustomed to that after a while," Mr. Hubbard laughed. "This town is built not after New York's pattern, but after that of an old colonial village. I wish to goodness I knew who forged Helen's name. Forgery added to theft makes a serious affair."

Bruen was still turning things over in his mind when he called for Helen that evening to go to the concert at the Lyceum. It was an affair in which the whole town took a great interest, as it was for the benefit of the Runyon Or-



"First, to what men have you written recently?"

phanage, and Bruen had had to secure tickets early. It was an elaborate affair of tableaux, a one-act play, and some very good music, but Bruen could not remember very much of it afterward. Helen was as pretty as a picture in her summer gown, and he was so conscious of her every gesture that he had no thought for the entertainment.

"I like warm weather because of the summer dresses," he remarked in an intermission. "Most women look their best in a light dress. This one of yours is a dream."

"Like it?" she asked. "It is quite familiar to most people. There certainly are advantages in having as escort some one just recently met."

"You haven't just recently met me. You've known me a long, long time."

"Is it a long time?" she laughed. "It seems to me like yesterday."

"The time can't have dragged much for you, then. For this small favor I am extremely thankful."

A singer fluttering forward gave her an excuse for making no reply.

"Do you care for vocal gymnastics?" she asked at the conclusion of the song. "She worked so hard, poor soul."

"I have often wondered how much of our musical taste is the result of training," Bruen said thoughtfully. "When a woman sings so high her voice is a mere squeak, or so shrilly it seems as though our ears would burst, we applaud and say she is magnificent, adding that she studied with Cheddadowski two years. I always want to laugh when they shake their heads as a cat does when she has a mouse in her mouth."

"How dreadful! Now whenever hereafter I hear Mrs. Pearson sing I shall imagine the mouse! Oh, a violin solo; I'm so glad!"

The cool air outside was so refreshing after the heated room when the program was over that Helen did not want to go directly home, and the walk was lengthened by a few blocks accordingly.

"I can't sleep if I go right in," she said. "I guess I have been thinking too steadily about the mystery of my express package. I can't think of any one in this town who would steal so

much as a postage stamp. I was at school with all these young people, and father has always known the older ones."

"Strangers are rare, I suppose," Bruen laughed. "That accounts for the sensation I created when I dropped in here so suddenly."

"Weren't they nice to you?"

"Nice, with a reservation. They all gave me to understand in some subtle way that I was on probation. Your father is the only one who has really accepted me yet."

"Why, haven't I accepted you? That is, aren't we friends?"

Bruen started to say something, and checked himself.

"Really, I ought not to claim anything like that, much as I want to," he said earnestly. "You see, you don't know a great deal about me yet. If there were some sort of test I might be put to, as in medieval times, I might show myself worthy of friendship, your friendship."

"We are losing Romance," she sighed. "But maybe we don't need tests any more. Doesn't everyday life prove a man worthy or unworthy just as well, even if it is slower than a joust?"

"It certainly is slow, though it may be sure. I think you are wrong about romance, though. I find everybody has at least a little of it in his make-up, though he does his best to keep others from knowing it. I am myself a dreamer of dreams."

"What do you dream?"

"I am going to tell you the wildest of them one of these days, not now. There is one curious thing," he laughed. "Did you ever read 'The Brushwood Boy'?"

"Long ago."

"It was long ago that I read it, too, but, if I remember it rightly, the gist of it is that the girl and man had the same dreams year after year. Now, I never have expected to find the girl a dreamer, too, but I know of whom I have dreamed. Years ago, at school, I dreamed I was walking through the East Side and found a girl bewildered and uncertain where to turn. It was mid-

night, so, of course, I acted as guide, and put her on a tram, not being encouraged to go farther. Another night I helped her to her train when she became separated from the rest of her party. Sometimes I dreamed it was day, usually noon, and sometimes midnight, but there was always relief in her face when I came. They were always little things that I could do for her, but they were welcome, and they gave me a sense of peace that was delicious. She made me feel always content—I can't express it. We said nothing to each other that I could remember, yet I have almost prayed that I might dream it when things have gone wrong with me."

"That is beautiful," she said softly.

"You must meet her."

"I have met her," Bruen said in a low voice. "I knew her the moment I saw her. There are not two like her in the world."

They had come near the house again just as the town clock pealed out the hour, and a man swung briskly toward them.

"Saints preserve us!" Vincent Hubbard's voice broke in. "How long since they moved the Lyceum up north? Don't you know it's thundering?"

"So it is," Helen laughed. "I hadn't noticed it. Won't you let us lend you an umbrella, Mr. Bruen?"

"I've had some good games of whist at Judge Sutter's," Mr. Hubbard said gleefully. "We got two rubbers. I didn't hear it thundering myself. How about an umbrella, Bruen?"

Bruen declined it gratefully, and hurried away to the hotel, making such haste that he almost ran over a young man on the corner without noticing him. However intent he himself was on gaining shelter before the storm broke, the other young man seemed in so little haste that he was able to pause a long minute to watch Bruen's rapid stride and note the merry lilting song he was humming. As Bruen disappeared in the darkness, unconscious of the frowning shadow he had passed, the young man turned quickly and followed him.

Bruen went in at the door of the ho-

tei, but the young man did not follow for some time. When he did he asked for Mr. Dobbs. The night clerk looked at him in amazement, and then whistled.

"What time do you think it is, Jack?" he exclaimed. "Do you know it's after 'leven? He won't thank me for sending callers up to his room as late as this."

"He's not a Runyon fellow, he's from New York. Tell him Jack Vane wants to see him about the matter he's here to look into, and he'll understand well enough."

"Say, you going to sell the Lewis lot, after all?" the clerk asked curiously. "I have had a bet with George ever since you went into the real-estate office that you'd never get that off your hands. Got sort o' scared when I seen this Dobbs fellow a-standin' by the stone wall lookin' at it last evenin'. I sort of stopped, and he said: 'How much's that field worth, old man?' I got some sore long of bein' called old, and I says it wa'n't worth shucks, bein' so near the railroad. He thanked me, he did."

"Well, I don't," Vane growled. "Spoiling a sale for me, like that. Are you going to send up my card or aren't you?"

"Guess I'll get my head taken clear off my shoulders," the clerk sighed. "But if I do it the consequences are all yours. Here, Bill, run up to thirty-two, and take this here card. Tell him Vane said he wanted to see him about the Lewis lot."

"Don't tell him anything of the sort," Vane told the elevator man. "I don't want him to know everything at once. Tell him I want to see him about the matter that brought him here. That's all."

"You real-estate fellows like to be all-fired mysterious," the night clerk said. "You're a lot worse than detectives."

"Why don't you oil your elevator?" Vane asked testily. "It squeaks enough to set one's teeth on edge."

The groaning cage came rumbling slowly down with a couple of passengers, who went directly out, nodding good night, and the elevator man crossed the tiled floor with much deliberation.

"Mr. Dobbs says he'll see you, Vane,"

he said. "Gee, the feller hadn't even thought of going to bed. Had the phone direct'ry and a map o' Runyon, and was studyin' for dear life."

"All right," Vane said sharply. "Take me up, and be quick about it. The third floor, isn't it?"

"No," drawled the man scornfully. "Anybody'd know thirty-two was on the twentieth floor of a skyscraper like this here. Hop in an' make up your berth for the v'yage."

CHAPTER VII.

Vane closed the door and crossed over to where the New Yorker stood awaiting him. Steven Dobbs was a stout, good-natured man, a little bald, and very brown and hearty-looking. He gave one the impression that he was the cellist or the baritone in a church choir. His face expressed nothing but placid complacency and self-satisfaction; no fleeting emotion ever showed on it, for even when he laughed his silent laugh it was only his mouth that moved.

"Good evening, Mr. Vane," he said, motioning to a chair. "I think you will find that one as nearly comfortable as any the hotels ever offer the weary traveler. You wanted to see me?"

"Yes, about the Hubbard jewelry. My brother got back from New York early this evening, and he said you were here. Have you any clews?"

"I happened to be down at the station when your brother came in," Dobbs said. "We quite naturally walked along together, and when we got to the wall of boulders he was good enough to tell me about the loss of the jewelry. I am here on a forgery case, Mr. Vane, but this is an interesting story."

Vane's face fell.

"Perhaps you don't care about this, then?" he asked. "I thought you were on the Hubbard case, and I could help you."

"If it looks good enough, I might work on it while I am here," Dobbs said, stifling a yawn. "Your brother was most entertaining about it. Bright young fellow, that."

"He's bright, all right," Vane said, much pleased. "He hasn't a fault except his love for spending money, and perhaps that's natural for a fellow brought up in this hole."

"Runyon's slow, eh? Your brother and you are dentists, aren't you?"

Vane laughed.

"Why, no," he answered, surprised. "What gave you that notion? I am in the real-estate office, and Paul's an express clerk. That is, he was."

"Resigned? It's a dog's life."

"No—sort of—well, suspended. You see, Mr. Prentice is quick-tempered, and he got mad because Paul took his vacation at the same time he did, and he made another fellow clerk. He'll have to take him back, though; there isn't another fellow in town that'll do as well in the business. But that's the way I got interested in the affair of the package of jewelry. It was lost while Paul was there, and I think I know who got it."

Dobbs folded up the map of Runyon, and laid it neatly on the telephone directory.

"All right," he said. "Let's have it."

"This town is easy, confoundedly easy!" Vane cried explosively. "A young man appears here from nowhere in particular, and pulls the wool over everybody's eyes. He hands out a cock-and-bull story about being from London, but he doesn't think it necessary to have any visible means of support. He wears a stolen locket on his watch chain, and declares he found it. If he did find it, why does he buy up other pieces of jewelry from the same lot, I'd like to know?"

"He did that, did he?"

"Yes, Helen told me he found them at the jeweler's and snapped them up before you could say Jack Robinson—if you wanted to. It always seemed like a silly thing to say, to me."

"Ah—Helen?"

"Miss Hubbard. It's her jewelry that's lost, you see. None of it amounts to anything except for association sake, unless some pieces had value as antiques. I suppose Bruen sold them for something worth his while, but he

couldn't have received a princely sum for the lot, seeing he had to sell his overcoat shortly after."

"A place of this size does not usually support a pawnbroker."

"We don't. It's the hotel barber that got the coat. I saw him strutting around in it."

"He probably paid too much for it to have it go unseen."

"I didn't hear what he paid. That isn't an important point, as far as I can see."

"None of our business, anyway." Dobbs agreed genially. "When did this Bowen come here?"

"Bruen, Thomas Bruen. I don't remember the exact day, but it was quite a while back, when it was cool. He was on the 'through' from New York, and got stopped by a freight smash-up. He got old Purcell to drive him about a bit, sized us up, and took his trunk off the baggage car. My idea is there was somebody on board he wanted to shake. At any rate, Pete says he left a pal on the train, a slippery-looking fellow in a brown coat. Pete saw them talking, and heard the other man tell Bruen to stay here, because he had no idea they'd get him so easy, or words to that effect."

"They've had a shake-up in New York recently," Dobbs told him. "Lots of confidence men started West about that time. Your brother was sure the thief would never be found."

"Paul does not reason things out. Besides, he doesn't know Bruen as well as I do. I think he was a friend of Frances Desmond. I know he asked for her address when she left."

"This Bruen is the young man who's going to marry Lawyer Hubbard's daughter, isn't he?"

Vane reddened.

"He thinks he is. I never saw a more confident fellow."

"The young lady has something to say about it, I suppose?" Dobbs said in a bored voice. "Of course, I know only what town gossip tells me. By the way, didn't the express company write or wire about this package when it was sent?"

"Paul says there wasn't a word," Vane told him. "You see, Paul was in the post office for a couple of weeks, working afternoons for Miss Purcell, who was sick, and he'd have known of anything like that. The telegraph office is in the same room, too. There isn't a morning mail here, and not a great lot when it does come in."

"It's certainly very interesting," Dobbs said, and yawned undisguisedly.

Vane took the hint.

"It's late," he said. "I'll go now, and drop in to-morrow. Follow up my clew, and you'll find a gold mine. Good night."

"I'm a thousand times obliged to you," Dobbs said gratefully. "I'll be glad to do something on the side, for this forger case isn't bringing me in a fortune. Good night, old man."

The door closed, and Dobbs seated himself at the table again. Reaching for a telegraph blank, he wrote:

Serpent in the woodpile. The children all have measles. Await instructions.

Something in the cipher amused him, for he laughed as he put on his hat to go out with it. It was one o'clock when he came back to smoke two cigars and go to bed.

The hotel barber had just unlocked his door the next morning when a short, plump man sauntered in for a shave. He recognized him as the stranger who was a guest at the hotel.

"Up early, ain't you?" he asked blithely. "New York fellers don't usually walk out before ten."

"I'm country-bred," the stranger said, as he seated himself. "I was raised on a Connecticut farm. I like the early morning, specially now it's warm. I'm glad to lay off my overcoat."

The barber laughed as he stropped the razor.

"Guess you had an old one," he said. "I have a peach of a new one, and I hated like sin to give it up. I'm a regular kid about clothes."

The barber looked sheepishly at his now inarticulate customer, and read interest in his eyes.

"You see, a feller came over from

the old country in a regular bird of a coat, and stopped at this here hotel, only place in town, except two good-for-nothing boarding houses up the road a piece. Well, seems like he didn't want to be so sort of noticeable as that coat made him over here, and he laughs about it to me. Says he guesses he'd like to give it to the Ladies' Aid for somebody. Well, soon's I found he was meanin' it, I up and offers him a dollar and a half for it."

The customer's eyes followed the barber as he wiped his hands on a towel, and still looked interested.

"He up and says he don't want the money, an' he'll be glad to let me have the coat. First off, I was scared he was a bank robber or somethin', but I got it straight from Lawyer Hubbard that there wasn't any screw loose anywhere. I shave him regular, like I do most of the best folks in town. So I got a swell coat, and can't hardly wait till it gets cold again. Bay rum? Try a little Runyon hair tonic? Well, anyhow, you hadn't ought to shave too frequent. You didn't need one no more than nothin' this mornin'."

Perhaps Steven Dobbs was particularly anxious to look well that morning, for it was almost immediately after his early breakfast that he sent up his card to a young lady in Runyon's most exclusive neighborhood. The maid said, with ill-disguised curiosity, that Miss Hubbard was getting ready to go out to market, but she might see the gentleman if he would state his business, since he had come from afar. Dobbs smiled kindly, and replied that he had no doubt Miss Hubbard would see him if the maid would proceed on her way. Helen came down almost at once, with her hat on.

"Mr. Dobbs?" she said quietly. "I am glad to see you. Won't you be seated, please?"

Sometimes the lines of a detective fall in pleasant places, and it was apparent that Mr. Dobbs had found one such. His immobile face expressed nothing, but his eyes lighted with pleasure.

"I came in regard to the loss of your express package, Miss Hubbard," he be-

gan slowly. "I shall be obliged to ask you a question or two which I hope you will answer as exactly as possible. First, to what men have you written recently?"

Helen flushed in some embarrassment.

"I wrote Mr. Fleming, the butcher, about an overcharge," she began. "I had a cold, and hesitated to go out in a storm, and, naturally, dislike to use the telephone for such a matter. I wrote Jack Vane about a reunion of our high-school class, to Bob Dickenson asking for an address, to a New York fur man about storing my furs, to—let me see, oh, to the Reverend Mr. Drake about my Sunday-school class. I think that's all."

"Not to Mr. Bruen?"

Helen felt an odd resentment at the question which she had not minded before, and her color rose before she had time to control her feelings.

"Mr. Bruen has not so much as a line of my handwriting."

"But he could easily obtain it, couldn't he?"

Helen looked at him with startled eyes, and her face grew white.

"You can't!" she cried. "How could you suspect Mr. Bruen?"

"I am not saying I suspect him," he said gently, as he made a shrewd mental note. "An operative has to be strictly impartial, and follow out every clew."

Mr. Bruen is a stranger here, and the mere fact of his having that locket looks bad to an outsider."

"But he'd be such a goose to wear it, if he stole it."

"Or very clever. Then, again, it was an odd way to come to a town, wasn't it, when you come to think it over?"

"He intended to stay overnight only," Helen said stoutly. "Just long enough to find the owner of that locket, and then go on to California."

"He did not go on."

"No, he—well, because he decided to stay."

"I see."

"The business, you know," Helen went on nervously. "It's all so interesting."

Mr. Dobbs accepted the lame reasoning as calmly as though it were as enlightening as Helen thought it.

"Exactly," he said. "He stayed—after he had disposed of his very peculiar overcoat."

It was a full moment before the significance of the remark struck her, and then it roused her indignation.

"Who has been saying such a thing



"It seems as though there must be a story in it all somewhere, perhaps a tragedy," Molly Prentice said shakily.

as that?" she asked sharply. "He liked the coat and would have kept it if I had not told him it was too dreadfully English. It was my fault that he stopped wearing it."

Mr. Dobbs' eyelids flickered as he studied the carpet a moment.

"Of course, I am only giving you a little insight into some of our methods," he said finally. "We take up everybody who might have a motive or an opportunity, and follow his or her every move, that's all. For instance, Miss Purcell, at the post office, might know the package was coming if the sender of it sent an advance postal card, as is often done."

"But Miss Purcell! I'd as soon suspect a—a chicken!"

"Yet she does not hesitate to steam open letters about which she is curious," Mr. Dobbs laughed. "And she hands her public trust over to every Tom, Dick, and Harry when she is ill or out of town."

"We have to have our mail, even if poor old Miss Purcell does have asthma," Helen retorted. "And everybody here knows Paul Vane. Why, I went to school with him, and have known him ever since I was a little girl."

"I had a talk with him. Pleasant fellow, I think."

"He's awfully nice," Helen said warmly. "It's a hard thing for a fellow to keep straight in a small place like Runyon, and it has caused some talk that he wastes money so. I'm sorry for it, and I have often told him he ought to keep straight for Jack's sake. When he was down in New York a friend introduced him to a rather gay set, and the mere fact that he knew some actresses was enough for Runyon. You know what a village is."

"Nothing worse," Mr. Dobbs laughed. "Well, I have taken enough of your time, Miss Hubbard, so I'll say good morning, and thank you."

The short, stocky figure swung gayly down the street, ran into the hotel office for mail and a telegram, and then proceeded on its way to the office of Vincent Hubbard, attorney at law.

CHAPTER VIII.

Helen Hubbard was stubbornly loyal to her friends, but the New York detective had given her much to worry her, and she was sorely troubled. Tom Bruen was a charming friend, but what did she actually know of him, after all? She had accepted his friendship on the strength of her father's liking for him, but on what did her father base his apparently unreasoning partiality? Bruen had brought letters of introduction, but such letters were sometimes forged, and her father was a gentle soul, who might have been tricked. Tom Bruen did not look like a man who would do such a thing, and yet, she reasoned, the men who did them never looked the part.

When she passed him on Main Street on her way to market he seemed self-conscious and cold, and her suspicions had grown in spite of her efforts to check them. Somehow, words had not been necessary between them; in the short moment the greeting had taken each felt the new barrier that might prove insurmountable.

Thinking it over, Helen resolved to be philosophical, and realize that it was a fortunate thing to discover what manner of man this was, so early in her acquaintance with him that it really made not the slightest difference to her. She told herself this so many times that she was very well satisfied with her calm, impartial viewpoint. One might be sorry to be disappointed in a friend, of-course, but there was some explanation; oh, certainly, there must be an explanation. He would offer one before long, she knew that.

Meanwhile a large trunk came from Caryville by freight, and Helen and her best girl friends reveled in the inspection of quaint frills and furbelows therein. The little, birdlike aunt, who had lived demurely in enforced economy, had hoarded gowns of bygone days and olden beauties, with a pathetic love for all that her dim, dull life had been denied. As the girls shook out the yellowed satins and faded velvets, the tears came to their sympathetic eyes.

"It seems as though there must be a story in it all somewhere, perhaps a tragedy," Molly Prentice said shakily. "She couldn't love all these ancestral things and not be dearly lovable herself."

"Molly's always looking for a love story," Helen laughed a little uncertainly. "That's what comes of being engaged to such a nice fellow as Bob Dickenson. Do look at the darling little slippers!"

"Even you haven't feet as tiny as that," Loretta Tripp laughed. "As for me, it would take a pair to fit one of my feet. What elegant long gloves!"

So, with laughter and tears, and an atmosphere of lavender and romance, the great chest was unpacked and the room strewn with its loveliness. Away down at the bottom a package of letters and a journal had quickly caught Helen's eye, and, with an apology that murmured private matters, had been laid away for future perusal. The girls were secretly anxious to know if the key to the little aunt's life were there, but they kept well-bred silence and made no protest. After Helen had looked them over there might be a little story she could tell if she would, and they would wait patiently.

"Myra Pinney would look like a dream in that satin, in spite of its being yellowish," Molly said dreamily. "She's going to be married this month, did you know it?"

"If you're up on wedding news, how about Cally Stratton?" Loretta asked teasingly. "Or hasn't your brother told you yet?"

"Will doesn't make a confidante of me," Molly laughed. "That's what comes of having a brother eight years one's senior. I'm glad there's going to be one wedding, anyhow, even if it is a quiet one. Runyon never was so dull as it has been in the past month or two."

"Helen's given us a little excitement by losing her jewels," Loretta said. "We have all turned into Sherlock Holmeses for her benefit."

"They weren't jewels," Helen said, stroking a bit of red velvet. "The law-

yer in Virginia sent me a list. There were in the package two brooches, one locket, three chains, four mourning rings, a gold pencil, six bracelets, a half dozen earrings, and, oh, some other things like that. He says they were all antiques, with the exception of the locket and brooches, and had, therefore, some value beyond that of the mere gold in them. I should love to have them, even if they weren't worth a thing, because they belonged to my grandmothers of long ago."

"Such things ought to be easily traced," Molly said. "Whoever took them was very foolish."

"I've heard such entertaining solutions of the mystery," Loretta laughed. "They have been so impossible, some of them, as to be actually funny. Mame Purcell thinks Mr. Bruen is a regular Raffles, and doesn't hesitate to say so, either."

"He's real nice," Molly protested. "That's perfectly absurd. You might as well suspect Mr. Hubbard."

Helen gave her a grateful look.

"Of course, I haven't any idea where the old things are," she said, with a sigh. "But it does make me provoked to have anybody laying this at Mr. Bruen's door, just because he's a stranger. Of course," she added quickly, "you can understand how I feel about it since I am responsible for his introduction to Runyon."

"Of course, we understand it all," Molly said wickedly. "You do not wish to regret having presented to our young innocence such a Beau Brummel of a wicked sinner. Gracious, is it that late? I've got to get supper, and had forgotten all about it under the fascinating spell of your heirlooms."

When the chattering girls had closed the door after them, Helen slipped back to her room and took up the little packet of old letters. Settled comfortably on the wide window seat, she untied the faded bit of ribbon, and let the letters fall in a cascade on the cushions.

The first one was a laughing note from an intimate friend, dated Thursday, and written in a teasing vein. The

little postscript was all that had saved it through the years from a fiery end:

I saw Jean's cousin last evening about four o'clock. He was riding, but he walked along with me with the bridle over his arm. He asked me who lived in the Great House, and whether I could introduce him. He caught a glimpse of you on Mrs. Hancock's gallery yesterday. Ah! Young lady, now we shall see a new conquest for that sad flirt, yourself! Do be good to him, for he seems a splendid man.

EVELYN.

Helen smiled a bit wistfully over the long-ago romance, but, eager for more, took up another letter, in the hope of finding another hint. The second letter was one of condolence on the occasion of her mother's death, and Helen laid it one side as too sacred for her eyes. She ran through two notes of invitation, and took up a fifth hopefully. It ran:

DEAREST BETTY: My cousin is coming down for the holidays, Cousin Cary, you know, and you must meet. You are made for each other, and I have told him so many things about you that he is half in love with you already. I visited Aunt Marcia last season, and found him altogether charming. The roads are so bad I cannot ride over, so I shall send this by post. We shall have a ball, of course, and dear knows what else besides that our means will permit. So do not fail me on your life. Yours,

JEAN.

This young man, then, was the same as the one mentioned in the note signed Evelyn. Had Aunt Betty kept all letters that held mention of him merely because he was spoken of? Helen wondered whether this were why her quiet little aunt had lived her life of a recluse in her pride and her poverty, loving a man who proved faithless or had died. The last letter in the bundle was long and of an entertaining tone that charmed her. It was only when she had finished it that she understood it and put its unwittingly cruel gayety with the gentle raillery of the notes that introduced the man. The letter was dated Florence, Italy, January eighth, and the signature was "Dorothea."

BLESSED BETTY: Eternity on the boat has been succeeded by a heavenly interim of steady floors, and David and I are really beginning our honeymoon.

There followed pages of youthful joy

and enthusiastic descriptions, and then the writer came down to earth with an abrupt and commonplace change of subject:

Oh, by the way, in New York we almost ran over that cousin of Jean's that visited her several seasons ago. You remember him, don't you? He was so extremely interested in you that you have no business to forget him so quickly. Well, anyway, he was in the city on business, having come clear across the continent to see a man. He's going to be married next month to a California girl, and seems crazy over her. I am quite rejoiced because I always thought of him as another of those whom your fickleness had hurt. You always were such a scamp! Even you would think him fine-looking now, though you would never acknowledge it in old days. I remember what fun you poked at the little picture he gave you that winter. Dear me! I suppose we never can fix things up for other people, but I certainly was sorely disappointed when he went away from Caryville. I know it is none of my business, but whether you quarreled or not, you certainly were made for each other, and you ought to have been Mrs. Cary Bruen yourself instead of this California girl—

The letter fell to the floor, and Helen stared unseeing out of the window. Cary Bruen! Her little aunt, with her big house and her small purse, had kept this secret love for forty long, silent years! The little photograph in the quaint old locket had been her constant companion all the days of her youth, and now swung from the watch chain of the man who had told her his father was Cary Bruen, the stranger in Runyon! The girls were right, there was a story, a tragedy, but not all of it written in the past tense. History was repeating itself, and here was the son passing his time in another village, with another village girl, before going on to California. After all, what could avail a girl? Because a man said pretty nothings a girl like Helen could not be won, but Tom Bruen did not compliment. He did not indulge in personalities, as did Jack or Bob, or any of the rest; he was earnest, and his eyes grew deep and dark when he looked at her.

Helen wondered to herself whether gray eyes that turned darkly blue for her were eyes that were untrue. What was he about to say of the girl of his dreams, the girl he had met? Perhaps

only that she was awaiting him in the West. What a foolish, foolish girl she had been to think that the close clasp of his hand, the earnest depth of his eyes, the tremor of his voice, had meant anything! Why, of course, that was a way they had, a gallant gentleness with all women of whatsoever creed or race, a chivalry as of old. And she had thought—

She drew herself up suddenly. It was too late to change anything that had passed, but not too late to plan for what was to come. If little Aunt Betty could be brave, so could she, and not even her father should know that she had given him more than a passing thought. The humiliating knowledge of the truth should be hers alone, forever.

Crashing into her sorrowful thoughts, the front door slammed noisily.

"Oh, Nelly!" her father's voice called up the stairway. "Come on down. I've brought Jack home to supper. Met him just outside looking so hungry I took pity on him. Come on."

Helen gave a quick sigh, slipped the letters into her desk, tossed some of the satins and velvets into a tray, and went slowly down to tea. She was taller and darker than Aunt Betty, dear little Aunt Betty, but she was quite sure no one could hold her head more proudly or have more womanly dignity in her manner, though her pink cheeks and bright eyes made the father fall silent while the young folks talked.

CHAPTER IX.

The day had been a hard one. Bruen was moody, which was unlike him, and Mr. Hubbard was troubled about him. He liked the young man, and had come to depend on him more than he had ever dreamed could be possible. He had had a rather lonely business life, full of anxieties and disappointments, and the optimism and vigor of the young man infused new strength into him. He had been so near acknowledging himself discouraged over the lack of business opportunities, defeated by the narrow limits of a small American village, when Bruen had appeared on the scene and

become a tower of strength and reliance. As he studied the young face at the other side of the table he felt the cloud too noticeable to be ignored. When Bruen looked up from his writing the older man's eyes met his with gentle, sympathetic understanding.

"Don't you want to tell me all about it, Tom?" he asked quietly. "It will be good for both of us."

The young man colored quickly, and leaned back in his chair with a sigh of something like relief.

"I—I was thinking of telling you, just at that moment," he stammered. "It must have been brain waves."

Mr. Hubbard picked up a paper weight and tested its weight in his hand. He did not raise his eyes, but sat quietly silent, his whole attitude expressing kindly sympathy.

"I hoped to have it a good deal different to this," Bruen began, falling unconsciously into old habits of speech. "I pictured it in your parlor or library, and it was going to be—well, not like this. You see, Mr. Hubbard, I came here by accident, as it were, intending to stay here only so long as it would take me to find the relative who owned my father's photograph. It was all so strange, so like a leading from an unseen land, and I was so interested. I came here to your office because an Englishman always turns to a solicitor for everything, and—well, sir, when Miss Hubbard came in it was all up with me. I don't know how such things come to most men, for I've always smiled a bit at the ravings of the men I have known, but it was my hour, and I knew it. It might surprise you to know how I took it, but it is none the less deep and real because I can speak to you calmly about it. I stayed in Runyon to win her, deliberately and honestly, if I could, resolving if I failed to go on to California to my mother's people, returning at intervals to try again and again. I thought I should not give up until she was married, but the end came sooner than—than I expected."

"Then Helen does not care?" Mr. Hubbard asked gently. "I am sorry."

Bruen's voice was not steady when



"I don't care about your father—yet," Jack said quickly, "I just want you to tell me when you'll marry me."

he made reply. It would have been easier if Mr. Hubbard had not been so kind.

"No, she does not care," he said dully. "And, what is worse, she does not even believe in me. She—she thinks I am responsible for the—the loss of the express package."

The paper weight fell heavily on the table, and Mr. Hubbard raised flashing eyes to his.

"Did Helen say that?"

"No, sir, she did not say anything about it, but I know from her manner that she does not trust me. It does look rather bad, doesn't it?" he asked with a rueful smile. "I drop in here perfectly unknown, wearing her locket, and expect to be received with more consideration than is accorded a man she knows all about. I didn't see it in that light, but now I understand how absurd my position was."

"Absurd nothing!" Mr. Hubbard said

sharply. "I had read those letters of yours, and knew you were fit for any society. Besides that, I had taken the precaution to write London bankers and make some inquiries of my own. Your character was above reproach. Helen must have known I would not receive you unless it were so."

"You probably said nothing. You quite naturally do not go about blowing horns for strange young men."

"I was purposely silent," Mr. Hubbard acknowledged. "There is enough of a glamour about the new young man without my adding more. Helen is a romantic girl, and she would have been too proud of your antecedents if she had known. I was never anxious to lose her, but when she fell in love I wanted her to care for a man because he was worthy of it and not because of his grandfather or his inheritance. It was a mistake, I suppose, but it is one that may be rectified. I shall tell her

what I know of you, at once, this very evening."

Bruen raised his hand in protest.

"No, if you please," he said quietly. "I should much prefer having you say absolutely nothing. I have a fancy," he added whimsically, "to have my wife care for me on faith, without any proofs that I am worth her caring for. If Miss Hubbard does not care that much, she does not"—his voice faltered—"does not love me."

"I think you are mistaken," Mr. Hubbard said quickly. "Remember Helen's upbringing and the principles of uprightness instilled into her from her birth."

"We did not leave ours behind when we went over to England," Bruen said, smiling an oddly crooked smile. "Nor our pride. You will promise not to say anything to her, won't you?"

"Yes, I'll promise," Mr. Hubbard cried explosively. "But, just the same, I think you are behaving like a confounded idiot. Lock up when you go out."

Mr. Hubbard was raging inwardly, and so cross with Tom Bruen that he welcomed Jack Vane effusively when he ran into him, and, by inviting him in to tea, sent the young man's hopes up to great heights. Had he known that all Helen's father's cordiality was mere reaction from his anger at the actions of another young man, he might not have been so elated or so happy in the gentle gayety of his hostess. Playing at cross-purposes, he was the only one of the three who was his real self, a very nice self when he tried.

Bruen went back to the hotel with dragging feet and a sharp headache. He prolonged the dinner to an unconscionable length in order to perform the operation known as "killing time," and then strolled idly down to the post office to get his evening mail. Three letters were poked out through the little opening of the grating, and he slipped them into his pocket for future perusal, standing a moment looking at the crowd that always streamed downhill as soon as supper was over. They were of all sorts and conditions—mill hands, school-

boys, ladies of all ages, colored women, a Polish girl or two—the usual company of people in an Eastern manufacturing village. Everybody knew everybody else, and their greetings would have made him most lonely had he felt in the mood for visiting. As it was, he listened to the scraps of conversation idly, and because there was nothing better to do at the moment. He paid slight attention to the things he heard until the conversation of two young women near him caught his ear.

"I don't see what we're going to do for men at the commencement dance," one was saying. "We had few enough before, and now Paul Vane has gone we haven't that many. Oh, I have a letter from Daisy!"

"Paul gone?" asked the other. "Why, he just got back. Where's he gone? Bertha, where's he gone?"

"Wait a minute," Bertha said impatiently. "I want to see what Daisy says about something. Listen! She's going to Germany with her aunt. Isn't that grand! What was it you asked me? Think of Daisy's going to Germany that way!"

The other girl was impatient.

"I just asked where Paul was going," she said.

"Paul? Oh, yes. I didn't ask, but I suppose it was New York. He was waiting for the local when I saw him at the station. He didn't look pleased to see me. What you waiting for? Come on, let's get out of the crowd. I thought I'd get some picture postals, but I didn't get a one."

Bruen sauntered back to his room to read his letters, one from a California cousin, forwarded, and one from his English friend Montfort that made him desperately homesick. He had planned to go back there for the wedding trip that was never to be. He sat looking at the letter for some time after he had finished the second reading of it, a vision of the familiar quarters just out of London hiding the writing. The bits of kindly gossip, the reference now and then to something they had enjoyed together, the good-natured chaffing, were

almost more than he could bear. Montfort declared:

We are all raw at your stopping so long in a beastly village. What is there so fascinating to a lad of your parts? Bob says you have found a fair maid, but I vow it will take more than that to make our Yankee stay away from his British cronies. Chaffing aside, old chap, we need you. We are as dull as old Higgins at Oxford, and we want you to liven us up.

Bruen laid down the letter with a sigh, tempered somewhat by a sudden resolution that he should go back as soon as his California relatives wearied of him, which, he trusted, would be soon. He would see to it that it should be soon. He took up the third letter in some disgust, so strong was it of musk. The lilac paper was monogrammed with F. P., but there was no signature to the note, which ran:

MR. BRUEN. SIR: I take an interest in you because you've got sense, and anyhow I wouldn't tell this to a flycop like Dobbs for all the world. I know all about this business of the joolry, and so will you if you go to the parlor of the Eagle Hotel, Jersey City, Thursday afternoon at two p. m., and talk to you know who when you get there. He'll be waiting there for little Me, but maybe you'll elope with him instead. I'm getting even, but never mind that. I ain't so cheap as to take stolen presents which I didn't know was stole. There's no use hunting for me. I've got lots of names, and could give you the slip. Besides, I ain't got anything to do with it.

FANNY PORTER, the vaudeville girl.

Bruen stepped to the telephone.

"When is the next train east?" he asked, and waited patiently for the answer.

The girl at the switchboard was deliberate, and he could hear her joking the lone bell boy about his curly hair before she repeated his question to the clerk, adorned with a few facetious adjectives of her own invention. The train left at ten-fifteen, and it was then nine-forty-five. Bruen thanked her, and hung up the receiver. For a moment he deliberated, wondering whether to take a westbound to catch the express or go east on the local.

Runyon was so small a place that even the mail went to a relaying station, and most of the trains were "through."

The eastbound would be quickest, because he could not be sure of catching the express at Barton, since, if it was late and was not flagged, it sometimes passed Barton by with a contemptuous snort. His decision made, Bruen packed a suit case, wrote a note, put his room in order, and took his key down to the office.

"I may be back by to-morrow night," he said. "I have been called away, but the business may not take me five hours. I don't know. If I am not back by Sunday, please give the key to Mr. Hubbard, who will attend to matters for me. Good night."

On the way to the train he ran up to the office, and dropped the note addressed to Mr. Hubbard through the slit in the door. A few moments later he swung on to the platform of the local, and pulled out of Runyon just as a short, plump man, much out of breath, ran up the station stairs. The newcomer gazed after the disappearing train; and, mopping his forehead, asked the ticket agent to tell him how soon the next train would be in for the east. Dobbs had missed the train by just thirty seconds.

CHAPTER X.

Helen Hubbard and Jack Vane had been playmates and schoolmates, and the Hubbard house had always been a second home to him. He had played in it when Mrs. Hubbard was a young woman, he had grieved over the death of her only son, and had mourned her own passing as sincerely as might a nephew. Helen and he had grown up together so naturally and gradually that she seemed more like a favorite cousin than anything else. Runyon was so small a village that few strangers other than commercial travelers ever came to it, and neither of them had ever met any one whose friendship was more valuable. Jack had always acted as Helen's escort to the town parties, and his regular appearance at Sunday-night tea had been a matter of course for years. With a lazy content Jack had absorbed the idea that one of these days

he and Helen might marry, but the notion had not overpowered him. A friendship that was so old a story that the village never smiled at it was not an absorbing romance.

That spring brought Tom Bruen, unknown, but with a magnetism he himself felt, a man invested with a glamour that always accompanies a "mysterious stranger." Mr. Hubbard, usually a cautious man, had fallen a victim to the newcomer's blandishments, and he was introduced into the circle where Vane himself had been wont to shine brightest. This was enough to make any man dislike the fellow, but the queer fact was that Vane could not help liking him. There was a simple genuineness about him that forced one to like him. What gave Vane the most concern was exactly that fact. There is a satisfaction in possessing a rival who is unattractive. He had tried to prove the stranger in the wrong, and he would give all he possessed to prove him responsible for the loss of the jewelry—not because he was a despicable character, but just because he was so likable that there was danger of Helen's discovering his fascination. For Jack Vane had waked up to the surprising fact that he was in love with Helen Hubbard, and had been since their childhood.

Helen's gay cordiality that evening warmed his heart, and his low spirits rose accordingly. He only reviled himself for not having realized long before how pretty she was, how altogether dear. He had accepted her kindness as a matter of course for years, while it might be that she had loved him despairingly all the time. The thought made his heart beat almost to suffocation while he endeavored to answer Mr. Hubbard's remarks on the Illinois strike and various European troubles. The new experience that had suddenly come to him did not make him feel his own unworthiness, but rather impelled him to make sure that Helen knew that he cared for her.

"The geography of the world has changed so radically since I was a boy," Mr. Hubbard was saying, "that really it scarcely seems like the same old world.

I cherished a secret hope that I should be the first white man to walk in the unknown regions in the middle of Africa, and lo! before I am an old man disinclined for exploration, they have electric lights, street cars, and the opera."

"I never longed for Africa," Helen laughed. "I want to get the means to go for a real European trip before all the natives talk English, or all the old buildings tumble down or burn up."

"I don't care a bit about any of it," Jack Vane said, with a wave of his hand. "I have never had the wanderlust. Runyon has always met all my demands."

It was a characteristic way he had of dismissing anything that was above or beyond him. Mr. Hubbard shook his head, his dark eyes growing wistful.

"Runyon has held my happiness always," he said slowly. "But I can understand how a young man might long for a wider horizon. I don't believe in rolling stones as a general thing, but the accumulation of moss does not seem entirely a worthy ambition. Helen, if you and Jack will excuse me, I think I'll run over to Judge Sutter's for a game of whist."

Something in the atmosphere after her father's departure made Helen rise and go to the piano. She did not usually volunteer to sing, though she was entirely free from the petty affectation of self-depreciation, but that night there seemed no other escape from the eyes that had held of recent days a new and rather alarming expression in them. She picked her songs carefully, and was serenely conscious of being free from blame when the blow fell. It was after she had finished a little French ballad that the sweet contralto voice was silenced in a little laugh.

"I think I can tell why you are so happy to-night," Jack told her, as he rose and went over to the piano. "And I am going to tell you."

Helen looked up, a bit startled, and then dropped her eyes for fear he could read the misery in them. Happy! She was never so far from happy in her life.

"Can you? Are you?" she asked,

tossing over some music. "What shall I sing next? How about 'My Ships'? I like that. Let's see, how does it go?"

Jack Vane put out his hand and took the piece of music from the rack, a new masterfulness in his manner.

"I'm not going to be put off that way," he said firmly. "I do not intend to be played with. You were glad to see me, and you have shown it all the evening. You can't deny it."

Helen hummed a line of the little song, striking a few notes on the piano.

"How sure we are!" she laughed. "Don't be a goose, Jack. I'm always glad to see you, and so's father."

"I don't care about your father—yet," Jack said quickly. "I just want you to tell me when you'll marry me. We love each other, and always have."

Helen rose slowly, and stood a moment looking at him, in total surprise. The suddenness of it was like a blow.

"Oh, Jack!" she whispered. "How sorry I am!"

His face paled, but he rallied in an instant.

"There's no use denying it," he said sharply. "You know you love me, and there's no sense in making believe you don't. Why, the very way you smile at me shows that."

She was so accustomed to him that she did not realize the boldness of his assurance, but she drew away from the piano, and sat down somewhat limply at a distance.

"I don't," she said, shaking her head. "I like you, you know, Jack, more than I do Bob or any one—almost any one—but I don't, I can't, love you. It's out of the question."

"Oh, no!" He spoke scarcely above a whisper, but his tone was not pleasant to hear.

"Oh, yes, it is! You see, I never thought of you in that way at all. First of all, you were dear Billy's friend, and then you kept coming—well, sort of out of habit. I thought you were perfectly safe. Really, I never thought anything about it. I'm ever so sorry."

"Sorry!" he cried hotly. "Sorry! That's what you say when you spill coffee on a lady's dress. Sorry because

you crush a man's very life. Oh, my heavens!"

"I don't know what else to say, Jack."

He took a step forward, and stood in front of her, his face very dark.

"You'd know what to say fast enough if it weren't for that confounded Englishman," he cried angrily. "If he had never come on the scene you would have married me. What do you know about him, anyhow? A nameless fellow walking in here with a trumped-up story about a locket—"

Helen had risen, and now stood aside, drawing quick breaths, the while her startled eyes looked at him unseeingly.

"It's true," he repeated more quietly. "There was no one else until he came, and you accepted his society without a question. If you know anything about him, what is it? Tell me."

Helen was at bay. What did she know? He had no right to ask her, and yet she must say something.

"You are being very rude," she parried. "You have no right to question me."

Jack Vane laughed jarringly.

"That is a confession," he said. "You know as little as can be. Any small child in town could find out more, and some of them have."

"Mr. Bruen never boasted of his people."

"Boasted! That's good, too!"

Helen's anger boiled over. She was not sorry even afterward, but she always blamed herself because she was so wicked as not to be sorry. Jack was such an old, old friend.

"It is no matter to you whom I choose for my friends," she declared in a low, vibrant voice. "I shall ask here any one of whom my father approves. As for you, I don't care if you never come inside my house again. I am sorry your idea of love should admit of your speaking to me like that. I am degraded by your choice. Good night."

"Nelly, listen!" Vane cried, terror-struck at last. "You are angry, and don't realize what you are saying. You will love me, won't you, when he goes

away? We have been such good friends ever since Billy died."

The mention of the idolized brother froze any pity Helen might have had, and she slipped past him into the hall without a word. She ran up to her room, and threw herself on the bed, breathless. How dared he! How could he accuse him of—of anything? She did not care if the whole town talked—oh, yes, she did. She hated everybody, and Jack in particular. She did not re-

lent even when she heard him close the door and go away, perhaps forever. When she heard the front door slam a second time she turned out her light and closed her door. So, when her father passed her room on tiptoe, wondering why Helen had gone to bed leaving all the lights burning downstairs and the door unlocked, she seemed fast asleep. She was far from it.

For hours she was motionless in a storm of contradictory feelings, and, when she finally found peace and fell asleep, it was only after she had whispered to her pillow that, no matter what or who he was, she loved him, and should always love him.



"Slowly, slowly, Bruen," Dobbs said. "Let everything be done decently and in order."

Jack Vane waited a while for her to come down, confident that she would return, and even when he found she had no intention of doing so, he let himself softly out with a reassuring certainty that she would send for him on the morrow. A becoming sense of modesty had been omitted in his make-up, and he had never learned how far he might trust fortune to stand by him.

He did not go directly home, but walked off over the hills into the quiet country night, and as he walked his reason came back to him by degrees. He told himself hotly that he had acted like a fool, and thereby lost the only friendship he really valued in all the world.

After all, why should any woman love any man? Why should Helen care for him who had never been anything or done anything noteworthy or in any way different or out of the ordinary? At last he loved Helen with a real man's real love, but, quite unconscious of any change, he knew it as little as he did the farmer who passed him with a curious look and a cautious nod. The selfishness was gone in the cool light of the stars, and his thoughts turned as for a balm for the sharp ache within, to some way in which he might serve her.

Trudging along with bent head and weary heart, it came to him like a blow that he had not been fair to the man from overseas. He winced at the realization with all that it implied, but his new love for Helen was doing much more for him than her years of friendship had ever done, and he acknowledged it. The fight was very hard, but when he turned back on his steps he held his head high, for he had won. The stars looked down at a man who had looked defeat in the face, and accepted his fate like a man. His only regret was that he had not acted the part in the first overwhelming moment in which his self-conceit had refused to let him accept the bitter, bitter truth. With something very like a sob he thrust his hands into his pockets and strode on.

The night clerk at the Grand Hotel was taking forty winks for the tenth time when he became conscious that some one was standing at the desk. He swung the register around and reached for a pen.

"Register, sir?" he asked, and then recognized the newcomer. "Hello, Vane! What are you doing out at this time o' night?"

Vane slipped the note he had been writing into an envelope, which he addressed and passed across the counter.

"Put that in Bruen's box, will you?" he asked. "I want him to drop in on me early to-morrow sure. It's important. Look out, the ink's wet yet, and you'll smear it."

The clerk examined the envelope curiously. Jack was turning away when

he woke up sufficiently to gather his scattered wits.

"I'll put it in his box, all right," he drawled. "But no tellin' if he ever gets it. He run down to the city this evenin'."

"Bruen?"

"Sure. He kep' his room, but I do' know's I'll ever see him again, or not soon, anyhow. Travelers are uncertain. Here's that Dobbs feller, too, skipped out like a shot not more'n ten minutes after him. Funny how folks won't stay put, ain't it?"

Vane looked at him dazedly. Why should the little detective go after the Englishman? His face lighted, and then clouded again.

"Then I won't leave any note," he said huskily. "No, I—I—on second thoughts, you'd better keep it. I know it's all right."

"Beats all," the clerk said, gazing sleepily after Vane's vanishing figure. "Some men are worse'n women at bein' changeable."

CHAPTER XI.

Small happenings assume the proportions of great events in a village. Helen's lost express package caused great speculation, and many were the wild guesses which the villagers made regarding the thief. When it became known that "the Englishman" had gone to the city on the late train there were many who nodded their heads sagely, and some who spoke their minds.

"I spotted him soon's I laid my eyes on him," old Johnny Purcell declared at the post office. "Didn't he try to flimflam me first thing? It was too thin a story, anyhow, that about liking Runyon such an awful lot. I druv him round, of course, like anybody would have, but I stuck him for a dollar, and was almighty glad I did, too, when he up and tried to flimflam me by mixin' me up with overpay. These foreigners ain't to be trusted. We got to keep 'em out o' Runyon, that's all there is to it. Keep 'em out."

"Easier said than done," his sister sniffed. "Besides, I'd like to know what the guv'ment would do without foreign-

ers, with their money orders and stamps. You ain't any idea how many them Poles and Swedes up to the factory buy. This post office wouldn't be much shucks if it had to depend on Americans. You yourself ain't writ a letter in ten years, less it was to order something from Chicago, an' then you get me to do it. If Americans ain't goin' to support the gov'ment, we got to depend on foreigners."

"All right far's it goes, Mame," a customer retorted. "But foreigners have got to behave, that's all. If Mr. Bruen was all right, why did the detective fly right after him, fast as he could go? I'd like to know that."

"I can tell you that, all right," Miss Purcell said importantly. "There's mighty little I don't know in this town. Mr. Dobbs, he came in here askin' about his mail, an' I was tellin' him a lot about letters an' things, so, of course, I told him this Mr. Bruen had a letter from the vaudville actress. I didn't know it was her then, but guessed it later."

"My land o' Goshen!" the neighbor cried. "You don't say!"

"I do say," Miss Purcell said impatiently. "Do give me time to get clean through a story, Mrs. Fuller. Where was I? Well, anyhow, I steamed the letter open, only, of course, you mustn't tell a soul, and it was some kind of a date for him in Jersey City——"

"Jersey City! What on earth!"

"If you're goin' to tell this story, tell it!" cried the postmistress sharply. "If not, let me be. I couldn't read more'n half the writin' on account of it's bein' the stiff kind that all looks alike, but, anyhow, it said to come to some place, I forget what. I knew then, all right, and made a clean breast of it to Dobbs. He lit out mighty quick, but George Butts says he missed the local and had to wait. I ain't never come so close to the law before, unless, perhaps, when old Doctor Cobb sued the Vanes on an old bill, and I think it's awful. This Englishman was so pleasant spoken it's just too bad. You can't always tell."

"He's the worst kind," sniffed Johnny Purcell. "Like as not they'll find his

trunk clean wide empty when they come to open it."

"Are they goin' to?" asked Mrs. Fuller, wide-eyed. "Ain't they goin' to wait?"

"What's the good o' waitin'?" Purcell asked grandly. "Crime is crime, and punishment ought to be made. Got any mail for the through, Mame? I'm goin' up now."

Tom Bruen had never, even in his Continent travels, put up at a worse-looking hotel than the Eagle at Jersey City. He would not have dared sleep there that Thursday morning had he not been conscious that he looked bedraggled enough after his hasty journey to match the clientèle of the place. He was not tired, but so impatient of the slow passing of time that a morning nap seemed the best solution of his difficulties. It would at least make the hours pass quickly, and he was certain that his sleeping would arouse no comment in a house where no questions were asked of any midnight arrival, no matter how disheveled.

At five minutes of two he walked down the stairs to the dusty plush "parlor," and seated himself. Sunk deep into a heavy armchair, he pulled his hat over his eyes and waited. The room was deserted, and if he had not had plenty to occupy his thoughts the wait might have bored him. The dingy walls, adorned with crayons and chromos, inclosed nothing of any interest to him, save as the setting might prove to be one for an entertaining episode. The ache in his heart, brought there by Helen's doubt of him, was all that kept him at a task which was bound to prove distasteful, a task from which he wished he might run, no matter what would follow.

At a quarter after two a young man entered, set down his suit case, and, looking nervously about, seated himself opposite Bruen. Tom looked at him sharply from under his hat, and rose quietly and closed the door. As the newcomer looked up, surprised at his act, Bruen stood looking at him. The newcomer fell back in his seat, and took off his hat to wipe his forehead.

"How are you?" he asked nervously. "Don't you think it's pretty hot with the door shut?"

"We'll leave it so, for the present," Bruen said calmly. "Well, Paul Vane, the lady gave you away. She's gone."

If he had known how hard the announcement was going to hit Vane, he would have been kinder, but he did not realize that the fellow cared so truly. Vane moistened his lips, and smiled wanly.

"That—that was only a joke," he stammered. "I—I didn't mean it."

"Neither did she. Are you really so simple as to think she would like such old-fashioned trinkets as these?"

With a scornful gesture Bruen laid the two old brooches on the dusty table, and watched his companion. Vane's face reddened hotly, and then slowly grew white again. Conscious of Bruen's scrutiny, he laughed shakily.

"Oh, those!" he cried. "They—they were my grandmother's. Where—where did you find them?"

"She sold them. Grateful, wasn't she? Where are the others?"

"The—the others?" Vane's voice was thick, and he involuntarily made a move with his right hand toward his vest pocket, and then checked himself. "I don't know of any others."

"Your—grandmother had more," Bruen said quietly. "There were earrings, a pencil, four rings, six bracelets, and a diamond-set watch that had value. There were other things, too. They arrived in Runyon May fifth, addressed to Miss Helen Hubbard, and the receiver of them forged her name on the book of the express company. You see, he knew they were coming, as he had taken a letter from the mail about them."

Vane half rose, but Bruen motioned him back again, no pity in him for the frightened man. The time for that had passed.

"As this is not the first thing the express company has lost in Runyon, they took the precaution of notifying the addressee by mail that the package was on its way. This was done from the New York office, where the package was relayed. Thus, you see, the thief knew

in advance of the coming of the package, and destroyed the postal or letter, thinking to get away with the package before he was discovered. It was a disappointment to him that it was valuable almost entirely for association. He would have gone had it not been for the fact that a friend of his came to the Lyceum, and delayed his departure by continuing a flirtation begun in New York."

Vane rose unsteadily to his feet.

"It's all a lie!" he cried. "You are very clever, but you can't prove it. I never saw Fanny Porter in all my life."

"Her stage name is Desmond," Bruen said thoughtfully. "How did you know her real one? Come, Vane, don't be foolish. Give me the pawn tickets from your pocket, and be quick about it."

Vane leaned across the table toward his captor.

"Look here," he said in a hoarse whisper. "Do you know what you're doing? If, as they say, you're smitten with Nelly Hubbard—"

"Stop right there!" Bruen cried angrily. "Such as you have no right to her name."

Vane laughed.

"Such as I! Then let me tell you, young fellow, that even if I am not fit for your society I am fit to be her brother-in-law. She's going to marry my brother Jack, and the sooner you know it the better."

Bruen bit his lip to keep back the angry words and avoid dragging Helen's name into such a controversy, but the blow hurt terribly. Surely Vane would not dare say such a thing if it were not true. The other saw his advantage and pursued it.

"It's easy enough to see what your game is," he said scornfully. "By a fool story like this you think to bring discredit on Jack, and win out for yourself. If you think that Nelly's that kind, you've got another guess coming."

Bruen's temper burst bounds.

"By Jove!" he cried. "If you speak her name again in this hole, I'll throttle you!"

"I'll say it as often as I want to."

Vane said, with maddening assurance. "It doesn't make you any more of a hero in Nelly's eyes for you to trump up stories about her brother-in-law. Nelly——"

Bruen sprang forward, with his arm thrust out before him. He never was quite sure what he intended to do, but he did nothing. Suddenly, as if by magic, a short, stout man came between them, and a quiet voice drove his anger to cover.

"Slowly, slowly, Bruen," Dobbs said. "Let everything be done decently and in order. Paul Vane, there's no use blustering or dragging anybody else into this. I have you on three counts—tampering with the mails, forgery, and theft—and there's no escape. This isn't your first offense, you know. The net is around you, and you go back to Runyon on the three-forty-eight."

The reaction came to Bruen during the long trip back to Runyon. In all his life he never forgot the desolate journey in the rain. A chill was over all the land, and the rain-beaten fields looked as desolate and forsaken as he himself felt. The sullen attitude of Paul Vane and the thoughtful reserve of the short detective made the trip far from lively. Once only was the silence broken by a speech of any length. Then Vane turned his gaze from the window.

"Tell me straight, now," he said, with strange solemnity, his white lips striving for composure. "Was it Fanny that gave me away?"

The detective bowed.

"Don't feel cut up about it," he said kindly. "I had you, anyway. You left too many tracks."

"I was green," Vane said bitterly. "I thought she was the real thing. That's what you get for trusting a woman."

Dobbs looked at him with a strange expression in his eyes.

"Yes," he said quietly. "You are certainly green. You did not know enough to choose the right kind of a woman. I know one who is as true as steel, and my kid and I find her just about the sweetest thing God ever gave to a man and his boy. It is like a fel-

low of your stamp to hide behind petticoats in that fashion."

The train slowed down at the Runyon station, and the three men stepped to the wet platform under the dripping roof. Across the hills a beam of greenish-yellow sunlight proclaimed the end of the storm, but the valley was still under the cloud of the dark day. There was no one in the station save the officials and a few idlers, but, to avoid comment, they called to Johnny Purcell to take them in the "ark" down the hill. The old man was quite evidently filled with curiosity, but their quiet and pre-occupation did not invite or encourage questions, and he and his mail bag mounted to the driver's seat in unwonted and unnatural silence.

"It certainly got me," old Johnny Purcell told his sister, as he opened the bag and dumped the mail on the post-office table. "Paul, and Dobbs, and the Englishman as glum as owls. There's something up, by gum, and I wisht I knowed what it was. Beats all how close-mouthed some folks are. It don't seem like it was hardly Christian to care so little about folks that you won't tell what's up. They all got off at the sheriff's offus, so if it hadn't 'a' been for this here mail I'd 'a' known somethin'. As it was, I had to drive on. I allers have to drive on when there's anythin' doin'."

Mr. Hubbard looked up with a quick smile of sincere pleasure when he heard Tom's step, and held out his hand in cordial greeting. Bruen closed the door and came forward.

"My dear boy, I can't tell you how glad I am to see you!" Mr. Hubbard said. "Sit down; you look worn out. What luck?"

For answer Bruen opened the box he carried, and displayed to view a collection of gold and silver articles such as the little room had never seen before. Mr. Hubbard glanced at them carelessly, and Bruen laid them on the table, with the inventory the lawyer had sent. He was curiously devoid of elation, and the whole matter seemed to him a weary business fortunately finished.

"Everything present or accounted for," he said slowly. "I have put the locket and the brooches with them."

"You paid for the pins," Mr. Hubbard said. "You must let me reimburse you."

Bruen shook his head with a rueful smile.

"Let me leave them for Miss Hubbard," he said. "They are not rightly mine. Dobbs has Paul Vane locked up now. He will not listen to reason, but I told him you probably would not prosecute. The mystery is all clear now, except how my father's picture came to be in the locket."

"Even the government is lenient at times," Mr. Hubbard said thoughtfully. "I do not know what the express company will do, but, of course, Helen will not want the case brought up."

"I thought not, under the circumstances."

"Circumstances?"

"Paul told me of her engagement to his brother. That is why I don't want anything more done about it, now that we have the trinkets. I have quite unintentionally hurt her in pushing the investigation so far."

"I don't know of any engagement," Mr. Hubbard said slowly, his mind turning to the previous evening—Helen's high spirits, the absent-mindedness shown in leaving the lights burning. "I don't know of it, but I may not be as wise as I imagine."

"I am afraid it is true," Bruen said, trying to smile. "So certain am I that I shall leave for California on the 'through,' going down to Barton to catch it."

"You have not been here a great while," Mr. Hubbard said quietly, after a short silence. "But I have put you in rather a unique position. I—I lost my boy, you know, and you have filled his place in a way I—well, really, I did not believe it possible. I don't mean to be selfish, but I—I wish you'd take to-morrow's train instead. Won't you? I—it seems as though I couldn't bear to let you go so—so suddenly."

His eyes dim with sudden surprising

moisture, Bruen rose, and gave the older man his hand.

"I'll wait," he said huskily. "If you are going home now, may I walk a bit with you? It is long after six."

CHAPTER XII.

Mr. Hubbard was as silent at dinner that evening as his daughter was talkative. She seemed to have found the happenings of the day of most absorbing interest, and she used them to cover the nervous fear of what she knew he would speak sooner or later. So when he sat back in his chair stirring his after-dinner coffee, while she pretended to eat blancmange, she drew a quick breath and held herself in readiness.

"It is quite evident from your chatter about hats and the dressmaker that you have heard nothing," he said slowly. "Hasn't the story reached this far yet?"

Helen's face grew white.

"No," she faltered. "I suppose they—they have arrested him."

"Yes, Dobbs brought him back from Jersey City," her father said calmly, dropping another lump of sugar into his cup. "Tom is much upset."

"Father, how can you?"

"How can I what?"

"How can you sit there so quietly when you might be helping him? You know he's as innocent as I am. He couldn't stoop to such things. He's too high, too—too, well, anyhow, he couldn't. I wouldn't believe it if a thousand Dobbs tried to prove it."

Mr. Hubbard's heart sank. Then it was Jack, after all? Well, Jack was a nice fellow, in spite of his faults, though he was not exactly the man he would have chosen for Helen.

"It doesn't matter about Dobbs," her father said a bit wearily. "All your things are at the sheriff's now. Paul's confessed."

"Paul?" Her voice was sharp with surprise.

A light broke on the girl's father, and he smiled down at his coffee.

"Certainly. It is Paul they have arrested. Paul, who declares he is to be

your brother-in-law. Interesting announcement for one's father to hear."

Helen half rose, and sat down again suddenly. Her lips parted as though she were going to say something, and then she put her hands over her flushed face and burst into tears. Her father rose, and led her to the library, where, beyond the range of Nora's eyes, she might cry in the recesses of the biggest leather chair. He knelt beside her, stroking her hand until she was quieted, and then he spoke soothingly, gently, as he used to do when she was very tiny.

"Come, come, little girl," he said over and over. "If you were not worrying on Jack's account, it's all right. Your father thought you were going to marry Jack, and it hurt him so, to feel you had not told him. It's just like the assurance of that jackanapes," he ended fiercely. "Taking it for granted that he would be your brother-in-law!"

Helen laughed shakily.

"You dear, good father!" she cried, giving him a close hug. "Tell me some more. I don't believe I understand yet."

"Well, Tom was so cast down by everything, particularly the impossibility of staying to testify against your aforesaid brother-in-law, that he told me he should leave to-night for California."

"Father!"

"Yes, Nelly. He's going back to England as soon as his visit there is decently long."

"Can't—can't anything keep him?"

Mr. Hubbard, looking into the eager, tear-stained face of his little girl, weakened suddenly.

"I made him wait till to-morrow," he said hurriedly. "Now, don't you think I'd better ask him to come in? He must be a bit lonely, and it's my fault for making him wait."

"Oh, you dear!"

"Yes, I think so, too. That is, unless Jack's coming?"

"No," she said slowly. "Jack won't come here again."

"So?" Mr. Hubbard sighed. "Too bad, but a girl can't marry every one. Now, you hustle and fix yourself up, and I'll phone him to come over. You must tell him about the picture in the

locket. He doesn't understand that as yet. Don't forget it."

"I'll tell him!" she cried from the stairway. "I—I want to say a lot of things"—she paused on the landing—"I think he's kind of nice even if he is Nobody from Nowhere."

"Nobody from Nowhere," Mr. Hubbard repeated to himself on his way to the telephone. "That's good, too. Hello, Miss Alice! This is Mr. Hubbard. Will you give me the hotel, please? Yes, I know the switchboard girl is at supper, but somebody will answer. Hello, this is the hotel? Give me room thirty-eight, please. Tom? This is Mr. Hubbard. Yes. Would you mind running down here for a moment, please? I want to ask you some final questions, and it is too damp out for my rheumatism. Thank you. Good-by."

Thereupon Mr. Hubbard selected an excellent cigar and a magazine, and withdrew to the library.

Nora showed Tom Bruen into the parlor as soon as his raincoat had been hung on the rack.

"It's damp out, Nora," he said. "Not raining now, however, but a splendid moon."

Rubbing his chilled hands gently, he stepped into the room, and found himself face to face with Helen. He retreated a step.

"I beg your pardon," he said. "Your father sent for me."

"No," Helen said softly. "I sent for you. You see, I—I—well, I wanted to tell you about the locket."

She had not meant to begin so abruptly, but something in his eyes hurried her on. He stood leaning on the mantelsheff, looking at her so oddly, so strangely.

"Yes?" he said. "Thank you."

"You see, my Aunt Betty lived in Caryville," she went on awkwardly, "and your father was there on his vacation. You see how it was?"

The gray eyes looked at her so steadily she could not tell of what he was thinking. If he only would look away!

"You see," she insisted stupidly, "you see, he gave her his picture, and she put it in her locket. She must have

done it, because they were her initials on the back. I have her letters, and one of them—well, one of them tells how he went away. Isn't it odd?"

"That was what you wanted to tell me?" he asked quietly. "Thank you. Is Mr. Hubbard in the library?"

"That was one thing I wanted to tell you," she said hastily. "The other was—let me see. Oh, I know! I wanted to say, of course, I didn't blame him for going away. How could he know?"

"Sometimes going away is the only possible way out," he said blunderingly. "There is nothing else to do."

She understood. With flushed cheeks she looked at him, her heart beating too hard to let her speak. He thought she loved him, and believed the kindest thing he could do was to go.

"Your cousins will be glad to see you," she said carelessly. "And you will be vastly more entertained there than here. I have not, by the way, thanked you for all you have done for me. It was so good of you to take so much trouble about my trinkets. I have not seen them yet, as they are down at Sheriff Kemp's, but I know they are safe. Good-by."

This was a new phase that he did not understand.

"I do not deserve any credit," he said quietly. "It was Dobbs. I want, in turn, to thank you for my delightful stay here. I have not had so happy a season since"—his voice broke—"since my mother died. I wish you had known her."

"I wish I might have," Helen said softly. "She must have been lovely."

"She was. Good-by, Miss Hubbard."

How hard he made it for her! What could she do?

"There was another—another thing I wanted to ask you," she stammered hastily. "And that is, well, don't you think it was a—coincidence, my aunt knowing your father and his going to California, too? Don't—don't you think it is?"

Tom Bruen turned back, and stood close to her, his eyes a deep, deep blue.

"I had called it a 'leading' instead of a coincidence, dear Dream Lady," he

said shakily. "But if you mean that you love the son as the aunt loved the father, if you mean it, say it, and don't, don't keep me waiting."

For reply Helen held out her hand, and was in his arms in another moment.

"The coincidence ends here," He laughed softly. "I do not go to California!"

"It might make a good wedding tour," Mr. Hubbard suggested from the doorway. "Helen, you scalawag, is this the way you act when the chaperon is having a quiet smoke?"

Helen tried to slip away, but Tom held her.

"Mr. Hubbard," he said, with a glorified voice, "I am the happiest man in the world! Helen loves me!"

"Well, well, I should judge something of the sort was the case," Mr. Hubbard chuckled. "I am glad she cares for Nobody from Nowhere."

"Father!" Helen slipped away to him, and put her hand over his mouth. "Don't you dare!"

Mr. Hubbard imprisoned the hand in his own.

"She said," he repeated huskily, "she said she thought you were kind of nice even if you were Nobody from Nowhere."

Bruen colored.

"When she passed me on the street she did not act so," he said slowly. "She gave me a pretty bad heartache for a few days."

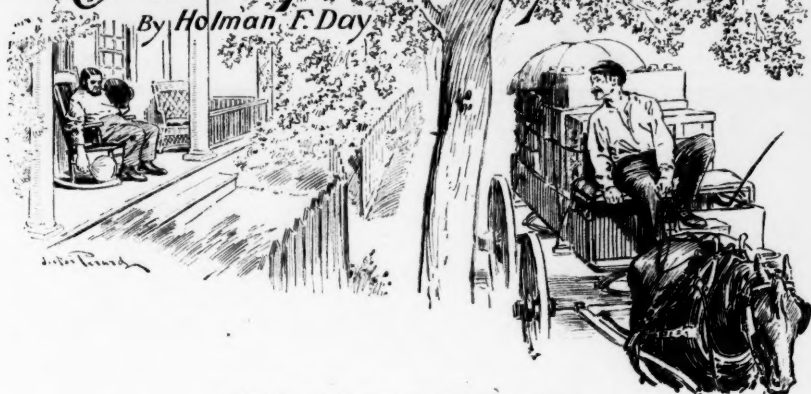
Helen stood between them, uncertain which to silence.

"She said," her father went on, "that I was a sinner to believe you were guilty. She didn't, no matter if you were arrested, and no matter how I urged her. Good joke on you, eh? God bless you, Tom."

With a cordial handclasp for the young man and a close embrace for his child, he turned slowly away to the stairs. Mechanically, as was his habit, he wound his watch as he went up, walking that night with dim eyes. Through the mist he saw as in a dream the sweet face of one whose picture rested in the watch lid, his Helen's mother.

THE CRUISE OF NARROW MARGINS

By Holman F. Day



ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

CAP'N AARON SPROUL sat on his porch in the choking sultriness of that August day, wiped the beaded sweat from his forehead, and lingered lovingly on two visions: a frog in a shaded pool, paddling webbed feet in the ripples which splashed over the lily pads, and—which was vision more entrancing—Cap'n Sproul himself, with arms hooked around the windward taffrail of the *Jefferson P. Benn*, the crisp salt breeze snapping past his ears, the waves tumbling along with white crests that suggested clean coolness.

The cap'n slatted more copious perspiration from his brow with forefinger, winked his eyes free of moisture, and gazed out over the parched landscape, where yellow dust clouds rolled sluggishly behind moving wagons here and there on the branching country roads, where quivering heat waves of the air beat up against motionless and wilted leaves; and then a cicada wailed its long-drawn, dry, creaking note, and that put the finishing touch to that scene of arid, suffocating, inland swelter.

A dusty man in a dusty cart that was drawn by a sweat-streaked horse pulled up for a moment in the shade of a maple in front of the cap'n's house.

"I s'pose you miss bein' to sea in such weather as this, Cap'n Sproul," he suggested. "'Where the breezes blow, yo ho—yo ho!' as the song says, hey?"

"I don't know what the song says," growled the cap'n, made peevish by the caloric. "I only know that when there's a spell of weather like this on it's no place for a master mariner up here among you stone-heap lizards. You go crawling around in the sun as though you relished it. It makes me hotter to look at you."

The man grinned.

"Weather bulletin has just been hung up at the post office, and says that this hot spell is going to hang on and grow hotter. You'd better squeeze a little more of that salt-water juice out of yourself, and get into the lizard class."

He slapped the reins on the wet flanks of his horse, and jogged on.

Cap'n Sproul mumbled an expletive under his breath, and rose and stamped into the house. In the dim and shaded sitting room his wife was at her embroidery, and her calm coolness seemed to irritate him still more.

"I see plainly that you've got to be born up here in the country, and live here all your life, to be able to stand one of these spells. Louada Murilla, I



Cap'n Sproul continued to slumber with all the heartiness of a weary man who loves the sea, and has come back to his own.

ain't in the class with you folks up here, and I can't get into it when it comes to hot weather. I've been trying to tough it out for two weeks. I've been gasping for air all that time, like a sculpin in the bottom of a dory. I just heard from that old parched skeleton that drove past here that we're in for a lot more of the same thing. I quit, Louada Murilla. I can't stand it. If I don't get to salt water inside of ten hours you'll be the Widder Sproul, with all the fuss of a funeral here in the hot spell. Help me pack my dunnage bag."

"But, Aaron," she protested, "you have always had so much trouble come out of those vacations you've taken at the seashore! You vowed and declared that you'd never go down there again for a trip. Think of those Chinamen—those Holy Rollers, or whatever they were, and——"

Her husband fixed her with baleful glance, and broke in:

"It may all come out worse down there than it ever did before, Louada Murilla. But whatever happens, it will be a different part of hell down

there from what it is here—and I reckon the change will do me good."

He pulled a blue, peaked cap from the hook where it had hung since the summer before, and set it resolutely upon his head. He had donned his insignia of the sea. That cap indicated unalterable determination. She sighed, and rose to obey him.

"I'm going different, and I'm going safer this trip, Louada Murilla." Her resigned air softened him. "I'm only going to do just what is done by a hundred and one other fellers who want a little outing. The trouble before was: I was making the vacation too complicated. I'm only going to hire a cat, and——"

Her stare of utter astonishment halted him.

"Well, what is there wrong about that?" he demanded.

"But you don't like cats—you won't have one around the house here. I——"

He did not smile. There was not even grim humor left in Cap'n Sproul after a fortnight of that weather.

"Cat is sailor name for a kind of a

boat, Louada Murilla. We'll let the subject drop right here. I'll simply say again I'm going all safe. Don't ask me to talk any more. I've got to save my strength to get to the railroad station."

Therefore, further preparations for the journey were made in silence, and Louada Murilla sent him away with much the same air a hen displays who beholds her duckling foster child paddle out upon a puddle; but during the years of their marriage the patient little woman had been obliged to indulge the vagaries of her sailor husband on many occasions when she understood him no more than a dove would understand a stormy petrel.

Scotaze seemed a long way behind Cap'n Aaron Sproul when he sauntered along the wind-swept docks of the seaport city the next morning. Even the oily scum which lapped the spiles of the old piers looked good to him. The twinkling waves of the harbor invited. With mariner's sure instinct in matters of the sort he found what he wanted—a broad-bellied single-sticker of which he became the lessee after a brief dicker. He scornfully turned down the offer of the owner to go along at a minimum wage as mate or cook or sailing master.

"Don't need a mate, relish my own vittles best on a cruise, and inside of two days would probably be walloping the old chops of any man who was buttoned up with me on a bo't and tried to tell me that he knew as much about sailing her as I know. Here's your charter money; here's your deposit in case of wear and tear; and if anybody asks you which way I've gone you tell him I started out headed up and down. That's all to date."

It was a labor of love to stock ship. He stored the barrowload of groceries which a boy wheeled down from a nearby store, made sure that the galley stove was in good order, and that there were plenty of blankets for the transom berth, hoisted his sail, cast off, and made a fine get-away, with a crowd of loafers peering down from the pier.

Once out of the jaws of the dock the sturdy old shallop leaned over in the drag of a southwest breeze, and butted

her way stolidly down the harbor toward the open sea. She had no speed, but, on the other hand, she had no tricks. Cap'n Sproul tried an experiment or two to convince himself that he had picked the right kind of a craft for the comfort of a lone sailor.

He had had experience with the broad-bellied, old-fashioned model in days past. He found that in a steady breeze, with mainsheet made fast and wheel in becket, she would hold her own course within a point or two, and that's near enough when one is not so very particular which port one makes. Cap'n Aaron Sproul had fled down from the blister and shimmer of inland heat to court his old mistress, the sea, and ports or direction mattered but little to him so long as he kept on sailing. In fact, that point was so well settled in his mind that he hummed an old chantey while he stuffed his pipe, feeling the first surge of the outside rollers under the forefoot of the old wagon.

"Whether rain or shine it's little I care, or
mind which way the wind is,
Or whether I make Cape Finisterre, or sail
for a port in the Indies;
Whether it's south for a cotton bale, or
whether it's north for the whaling,
I don't give a damn just where I sail, so
long as I keep on sailing."

The clean, salty wind caught the blue wreaths from his pipe, and whirled them over the lee rail. Along the old roll of the sea came tripping the little new waves which the southwest breeze had stirred into the spirit of skylarking. The sky was blue and cloudless. There was no weather to fear. Cap'n Sproul's unerring nose for weather assured him on that point. The toss of the sweeping swells caressed his mariner's soul.

He shut his eyes, and could see the dusty hills of Scotaze, with more dust shaking down on them from the pall which followed every rolling wheel in town. He could sense the panting heat, and see the limp leaves of the tree where the dry shriek of the locust accentuated the Gehenna torridity of that parched August. Then he sighed happily, and opened his eyes on the welter of the cool waters, snuffed the tingle in the air, and dismissed all his troubles.

"It's in the blood of a real seafaring man," he mumbled. "He can dull it down winters when the winds are howling, and he is happily married. But when all inshore is like a locked-up room with a red-hot stove in it, then he hankers for the open sea, three miles offshore for me! The high seas! I shan't be happy till I know I'm on the high seas, where there ain't a grain of smooch from that cussed old dust heap some folks live on all their lives without knowing what they are missing."

He pointed the boat's nose squarely at the middle of the wide horizon which had opened between the noses of the harbor's guarding capes, lay on his back in the cockpit, and drank in breeze and sunshine. Every now and then he lifted his head, and took a peep over the rail to make sure that no one threatened his right of way. But he seemed to have the ocean to himself that afternoon, except for distant sails which notched the horizon line. He lunched heartily off tinned meats and hard-tack, and the old single-sticker drove ahead with lashed tiller, steering herself as handily as though she were trying to assure the cap'n that she knew a thing or two herself when a real seaman gave her a chance to show it. Cap'n Sproul continued to lie on his back, cocked one leg over the other, and proceeded to take solid comfort.

Perfect peace just naturally leads to slumber, Cap'n Sproul had dozed fitfully all the night before, flopping a hot pillow every now and then. The waves rocked him now, the breeze fondled him, sunshine smiled on him, and the open sea had no terrors for him. His pipe dropped out of his mouth, and he snored whole-heartedly.

The old cat kept straightforwardly on, as one who understood that the duty of sailing had been turned over by the master. The course had been tacitly given by the lashed wheel—the wheel said: "Hold her as she goes."

But when the breeze suddenly dies from the southwest, and after a little pause comes from the northwest, with whorl on the water and soft piping among the cordage, what is an old cat-

boat to do then in an emergency when a captain fails to awaken, though signaled as best an old cat can with flapping hal-yard and jangle of block and slap of idle sail? A faithful old cat must use some personal judgment, of course. So, after a little pause, the *Damietta* and *Juana* luffed, gathered way, and started off on another leg of a triangle.

Cap'n Sproul continued to slumber with all the heartiness of a weary man who loves the sea, and has come back to his own.

If he could have seen where this new leg was taking him he would promptly have lost some of his admiration for the qualities of his craft. The *Damietta* and *Juana* was showing a lamentable lack of brains.

She was heading across the course of a tiny topmast packet which had followed her from the harbor. The packet was still a goodly distance away, to be sure, but in maritime affairs it is well to be cautious.

There was only one man on the packet. When the moderate north wind came he perceived that it meant sailing "full and by" for him, and a straight course for the open. He slipped a bight of rope about a spoke of his wheel. He yawned once or twice, took a cursory glance around, and then nested his head in his clasped hands, and leaned against the taut sheet. He did not snore as loudly as Cap'n Sproul, but it was plain that he was asleep, for he did not alter his course when the old cat came tossing determinedly across his bows, holding to her right of way on her starboard tack. She seemed to know that the packet coming "full and by" had no right to hog the road. Had Cap'n Sproul been awake he might have admired that knowledge of the rules of the road even while he cursed the judgment of the *Damietta* and *Juana*.

As so often happens in real life, the old cat, though in the right, got the worst of the encounter. The heavier packet caught her broadside on, smashed the cat's side in, and then, lifting on a swell, rolled the single-sticker contemptuously under her forefoot.

In that crisis any one except a veteran



He "skun the cat" over the stays.

seaman would have gone down with the cat. But when Cap'n Sproul opened his eyes at the first impact he saw a familiar sight just over his head. The bobstays of a blunt jib boom were in easy reach—and he reached. He "skun the cat" over the stays, caught at the downhaul of the jumbo jib, and hurled himself onto the forepeak of the packet just as the doomed cat went out of sight under the spurning cutwater. Then, when he had recovered his breath, and his voice, and some of his half-awakened wits, he went aft, for the man at the wheel seemed to be waiting for him.

The first interchange of high-seas amenities took place at a distance of ten paces, and Cap'n Sproul gradually decreased the distance until he was able to swish his stubby forefinger under the nose of the skipper of the packet. Cap'n Sproul, having been thoroughly awakened by his lively experience, had the advantage at first. But the blinking skipper of the *Effort* also possessed powers of vituperation, and exhibited them as soon as he woke up. He was a tall and rangy individual, with a cock eye and the bulge of a lump of tobacco in his cheek.

"I'll have you before the admiralty court of the United States for this," raged Cap'n Sproul.

"Who do you think you're talking to?" demanded the other. "Why, you're talking to the United States right this minute. Do you know what you're aboard of? This is the packet *Effort*, carrying the United States mails to Machigonne Island. You was trying to obstruct the United States mails. How do I know you ain't a mail robber? Robbers roll rocks onto the steam-car tracks to hold up trains. It would be just like a robber to ram an old sloop into the *Effort*, and try to hold her up. I reckon I've got you sized, but you look out for me, Mister Robber."

"It was a sloop, then, was it?" inquired the cap'n, his eyes narrowing. "When it comes out in evidence on the witness stand, it was a sloop, was it?"

"Sloop it was," returned the other boldly, though his eyes flickered under the cap'n's hard stare.

Cap'n Sproul glanced astern to note whether any traces of the ill-fated craft remained above water. But the sea had closed above her.

"Sloop?" he repeated.

"Yess'r, sloop."

"You goggle-eyed, tobacker-walloping crab of a liar!" stormed the cap'n. "What you have run down was the cat *Damietta and Juana*, and I can prove what I say, for it was under charter to me, and my name is Aaron Sproul, former master of the *Jefferson P. Benn*." He swished his forefinger once more under the retreating and apprehensive nose of the *Effort's* skipper. "You didn't see what it was you hit. You had your wheel lashed, and you was asleep," he roared. "You was ramming down the high seas asleep. Now go into court with that."

The tall man extracted the tobacco from his cheek, and tossed it overboard. He may have done this so that he could twist his face into a smile more easily. At any rate, he smiled.

"Cap'n Sproul, I take pleasure in meeting an old master mariner I've heard about along the water front. In spite of what names you have called me, I'm going to be straight with you. I was asleep. I was on my regular course, and nothing seemed to be hindering, and I took a nap. Now, what next I say ain't for slur or slander—but I'll bet marlinespikes to toothpicks that you was asleep yourself. That's the only way to account for your being caught the way you was."

The cap'n regarded the tall man for some moments, and his features softened under the smile.

"I'm never backward in meeting a man halfway," he stated, "whether it's with fists clinched or hands open. I was asleep myself. The thing won't go into court. We'll call it a stand-off. I'm able to stand losses."

"I'm too poor to buy even a six-hoss-power kicker for the *Effort*, and so I can't offer to make good to you for any fault of mine. They are threatening to take the mail contract away from me because I'm so uncertain—and I've got a family to support," sighed the other. "I was becalmed last night, and sculled this old hulk more'n ten miles. That's how I came to be asleep—I was dog-tired. This wind is letting go. I reckon I'll have to scull again to-night. And

they're getting so poor out on Machigonne that they don't eat much but salt fish and bannock bread—and there ain't much money in what freight I get to carry. It ain't what it used to be 'long-shore, Cap'n Sproul. Some gents like you strike it rich, make their pile, and live happy ever after. Other critters, like me, starve to death while they're working."

Cap'n Sproul was scarcely in the mood just then to weep over the troubles of others. He had only the clothes he stood in, and even those were wet. But he looked at the long roll of the surge, felt the tang of the brine in his nostrils, and resigned himself to circumstances. This was better, at least, than the sunbaked hills of inland Scotaze, where people suffered and sweltered through the summer heat because they did not understand the palliative the sea had to offer.

"I don't give a damn just where I sail, so long as I keep on sailing," muttered Cap'n Sproul. "You've got a passenger to Machigonne," he informed the skipper of the *Effort*.

Then he borrowed a pipe, and proceeded to make the most of the occasion.

It was plain that the breeze was "letting go," as the tall man had dolefully predicted. That northwest shift had been its final spurt.

After a time the old packet surged sullenly, with momentum stayed, her sails sagging idly and her tackle rings jangling as she rolled.

"There ain't a hole or a nubble in the sky to promise a breeze, so far as I can see," lamented the skipper. "In the old days they wasn't in any such pucker to get their old United States mails back and forth. If there wasn't any wind they didn't expect any mails. But now I suppose it's up to me to scull again all night, or else there'll be a holler, and I'll lose my job."

He lifted a long sweep from its brackets in the lee alley, stuck it over the stern, and began to scull with weary stroke.

"Yess'r, you take it in these times of high living and bangity-whoop ways of doing things, and there ain't any peace

or rest for anybody, Cap'n Sproul. Mails has got to get there, they all say."

"This would be a good way to have dunning bills come," remarked the cap'n, "but when a man is expecting money or a love letter I suppose he wants a mite more hustle."

They had made about a mile of sluggish progress, when the skipper gave over sculling, and pointed to objects on the breast of the sea.

"That's kind of tempting to a poor man, Cap'n Sproul, even if he has got the United States mails on board, and is expected to guard 'em and get 'em there."

Considerable freshly sawed lumber was floating here and there, scattered on the ocean. Some schooner had lost a portion of its deckload. There were boards, and planks, and several bunches of shingles to be descried even at that distance. The eyes of the tall man glistened, and he licked his lips.

"Looks like the Lord had sent that to a man like me who is thinking of building a new L onto his house."

He hesitated a while, and ventured further:

"Of course, some people would say it wasn't right to stop getting the United States mails to where they are going—and then again, when a man is poor, and the Lord sends him something worth picking up, it might seem like flying in the face of Providence."

"Say, look here," interposed the cap'n, "if you want that lumber why don't you go get it? There's no need of your walking around me any longer like I was a dynamite cartridge ready to explode on you. Furthermore, seeing that this trip is getting pretty tame, and I'm needing some exercise, I'll go along, and row that yawl boat of yours while you grab in the lumber."

"And of course nothing is ever to be said to the United States government?"

"Me and the United States government ain't chummy," stated the cap'n. "You'd be a fool to let all that good lumber go to waste for the sake of getting a few liquor circulars and picture post cards out to that island an hour or so earlier."

"Seeing that you advise me to do it, by thunder, I'll do it."

The packet's yawl boat was towing astern. The sea was glassy, and the long roll exhibited the boards and planks most tantalizingly, lifting them against the sky.

The packet's skipper secured a pike pole with a screw tip, and while the cap'n rowed he poised himself in the stern of the yawl, and made ready to spear his prey. The first capture was a fine new plank. Next a bunch of A No. 1 shingles was pulled over the side, and from that time on the lust of salvage absorbed the attention of the yawl boat's occupants.

The flotsam was widely scattered, and the cap'n rowed to and fro with attention strictly confined to his duties. As for the skipper of the packet, he was fairly beside himself with joyful excitement as the load of the yawl increased.

But all at once, as he was spearing at a board, he noted a whorl on the silken surface of the sea. It was caused by a puff of breeze. He did not spear the board. He whirled and popped a look at the *Effort*. Her sails were vibrating restlessly.

He yelled an alarm, but Cap'n Sproul pacified him:

"That cat's-paw won't start her. I don't want to cast any slurs on your packet, What's-your-name, but she gathers headway about as fast as a barn in bog mud. Get your board, there. I'll row back."

When he had covered a few rods on the return to the packet there came a flurry of breeze which raced ripples along the surfaces of the surges.

"My Gawd, she'll get away from us!" yelled the skipper. "Her sails filled that time, and she headed up into it. She'll get away with them United States mails on board."

"If I can't row faster than that old bread bowl can sail in an ordinary breeze, I'll eat that bunch of shingles without vinegar on 'em," declared the cap'n.

There was an extra oar in the boat, and the skipper dug it from under the lumber, and began to scull in an effort to



"I'll have you before the admiralty court of the United States for this," raged Cap'n Sproul.

second Cap'n Sproul's efforts, though the cap'n profanely suggested that he did not require any assistance in reaching the *Effort*. In fact, it was plain that he was overhauling her rapidly.

But the next onslaught of the breeze was more pronounced and more prolonged. It was not a mere puff. There was weight to it. With a grotesque air of playing a cumbrous game of tag, the ancient *Effort* heeled, paid off for a little ways, and then headed up, and proceeded on her starboard tack, her wheel in beackets keeping her on the course.

"You're just holding your own!" shrilled the skipper, sweat dripping over his convulsed features. "No, I swow, she's getting away from us. She's gaining. She's frothing, and she's foaming! Them United States mails is gone, and I'll get sent to jail. And there wasn't no need of it if I had been left alone to 'tend to my own business."

"Look-a-here, you ain't ringing me into this thing as responsible for your

cussed foolishness, be you?" demanded Cap'n Sproul, with sudden heat.

"Who was it advised me to leave my bounden duty, and disregard the oath I took never to leave the United States mails, never under any circumstances? Who was it put it into my head to come out here fooling around after a lot of damfool lumber? Who was it that jumped aboard a United States mail packet without being asked nor invited? I tell you, if I'm put onto the stand before I'm sent away to jail I shall tell the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and then they'll see who it was that started this whole thing, and coaxed me away from my bounden duty. Why don't you row, you old musser-in? Go to work and get an honest and hard-working man into a scrape with the United States, and then lag back on your oars like it wasn't a matter of life and death! I'll show you up when it comes time to know who is responsible for this."

It seemed to be hard work for Cap'n Sproul to tear his gaze from this tempestuous individual in the stern of the yawl who was sculling and storming. But he rested on his oars, and took a squint over his shoulder in the direction of the packet. The breeze was holding, and she was gaining—there was no doubt of it. Her sails were full, and she was leaning to the thrust of the wind. But even while he gazed the wind died again.

"Close your main hatch, there!" yelled the cap'n to the tall man, who was beginning his recriminations all over. "We can overhaul your blasted old tub if you keep your oar going instead of that tongue of yours. I'll row now, and settle with you later for that talk you have been handing to me."

"I apologize for what I said to you a while back," remarked the packet's skipper, after a time.

They had been propelling the yawl in silence, and the calm on the sea had continued. They had nearly overhauled the packet, and it was plain that the tall man was beginning to entertain doubts of what might happen when this grim master mariner began that settlement of which he had spoken.

"I spoke quick and hasty when I was afraid of what the United States government might do to me."

"Now you are crawfishing when you are afraid of what I may do to you," said the cap'n, leveling hard, gray eyes on his boatmate. "It ought to occur to you that a man who has been to sea, and has commanded men for as many years as I have, doesn't take orders from cheap galoots on packets, not when their orders are delivered like you delivered them to me. When we get aboard that packet we'll look into that matter of remarks a little."

But it became promptly plain that the *Effort* did not propose to be the forum of a settlement just then. Another gust bellied her sails. The yawl was within a rod of her weatherworn counter. Cap'n Sproul set his teeth and rowed furiously.

"Jettison cargo—jettison cargo!" he

panted between strokes. "Throw that cussed lumber overboard!"

The tall man obeyed with groans and grunts, and the fruit of his toil splashed into the sea. But even when the yawl had been lightened, human arms were not a match for the stiffening breeze. The old packet pulled away steadily.

"You ain't half rowing," complained the skipper.

Cap'n Sproul was pulling at the oars, his eyes shut, the veins swelling on his temples. He was striving with every ounce that was in him. He opened his eyes, shipped the oars, and rose, and started for the stern. The skipper dove past him, and grabbed the oars.

"Don't you dare to interfere with me!" he squalled. "I represent the United States, and I'm after them mails."

He began to row frantically, and his passenger settled down and watched his efforts with grim satisfaction.

"I don't give a damn just where I sail, so long as I keep on sailing," he quoted under his breath. "You might get out, and run ahead of her, and throw up your hat, and shoo her to a standstill," he advised the agonized skipper. "That will be more sensible than trying to catch her with this wind blowing. Furthermore, there's a squall coming from the nor'ard."

It was upon them as he spoke. It whipped the wave crests into foam, and the yawl began to toss and wallow.

"Oh, my Gawd!" moaned the skipper, giving over his toil at the oars. "I've lost them mails, and I've lost my job, and I've lost my vessel all on account of picking up a Jonah. This is what comes of taking advice when I knowed better all the time, and didn't want to leave my packet, and was persuaded against my will. If there's any law and justice left in this world I'll sue for damages."

Utter disgust kept Cap'n Sproul from retort. Besides, the old packet, in the clutches of that freakish, veering squall, was cutting up queer didos, and he became interested. She was luffing, and backing, and gybing, and wheeling into the wind for spasmodic tacks, abandon-



"Help!" responded the tall man. "Help!" echoed the other.

ing these tacks to scoot in other directions—acting like a ponderous old cart horse who has been turned out to grass after many years of stall and toil.

"You take considerable muscle, and plenty of guesswork, and a little knowledge of the figures of a square dance, and you may be able to stab across and catch her," affirmed the cap'n judiciously. "Or you might set here and whistle till she quiets down and comes to you."

"Now you want to pick a row with me on top of all my other troubles," whined the tall man. "Go ahead and pick. I'm ready for you. I don't care

what happens. There ain't nothing more to live for. I'd like to take you with me to Tophet, and exhibit you as something all ready for horns and a tail. So come on and pick your row."

But the cap'n had no appetite for further controversy just then with a man whose wits seemed to have deserted him. He leaned back, and crossed his legs.

"Take your time about the rest of this trip, and don't mind me," he said affably. "I'm down from inshore for an outing, and I don't care a hoot which way I sail, so long as I keep on sailing, as the old song says."

The tall man sat leaning on his idle oars, twisting his head on his gaunt neck, and following the erratic movements of the packet as an owl surveys a moving object of interest.

To pursue with oars while that squall continued was idle effort. Even the fever of a wildly impatient man was cooled by the spectacle of that packet playing its bizarre game of "tag, you're it."

Suddenly he pulled in one oar, and pointed a quivering finger. Cap'n Sproul, to show his general indifference to all matters in which the tall man was interested, had been dozing. He opened his eyes when the skipper barked astonished call for him to look.

Something in the sailing-craft line was bowling down the sea toward them.

That is to say, it bowled for a few moments, and then engaged in strange gyrations. It seemed to pause and revolve on its stern, with great flapping of the single sail, which was set. Then it came on for a space, and again paused to circle on the sea.

"After taking a cursory look I should say that here comes a dancing partner for that packet of yours," remarked Cap'n Sproul.

The strange craft had its stern nearly submerged in the water. The bow stuck up so high that almost a third of the vessel's forepart was out of water. With center of gravity thus displaced, and with a sail set, the craft was the prey of the freaky wind.

But in spite of its dervishlike revolvings the vessel came on toward them.

The skipper of the *Effort* stood up in his yawl, and bellowed "Help!" between his hollowed palms.

Only one man was in sight on the tip-tilted craft. He promptly scooped his hands at his face, and yelled: "Help!"

"Help!" responded the tall man.

"Help!" echoed the other.

"Better tackle a new subject," advised Cap'n Sproul. "Neither of you seems to be getting anywhere on that tack."

"Hard over! Lay her into the wind!" roared the *Effort's* skipper.

"I don't know what you mean—and I couldn't do it if I did know," confided the other man, with cracked tones.

His craft had halted on the seas, and was spinning around once more in dizzy circles. That halt and the plain incompetency of the man at the rail invited action on the part of the man in the yawl boat. He shoved out his oars and rowed with all his might. The strangely ballasted craft ceased its spinning, and made off with upcocked nose, headed for the open sea. The fellow on board paid no heed to the frantic appeals of the rower to bring her into the wind. But the dragging stern made her a sluggish sailer. The next time she paused to indulge in spinning, the tall man drove the yawl alongside, and leaped over the low rail with the painter in his clutch and the cap'n at his heels.

An excited individual in jumper and

torn blue overalls dashed past them, and was about to throw himself into the yawl. Cap'n Sproul restrained him by force.

"Help!" shouted the man. "I want to be saved!"

"So do we," confided the cap'n. "But before we go to swapping boats we'd better come to an understanding."

His quick seaman's glance took in the situation on board the vessel.

A rusty steam boiler had been loaded aft. Under its weight the stern had settled.

"They went back onto the wharf to derrick aboard the engine and the rest of the stuff to make a load and balance her, and the sail was up to get it dry, and the blasted old ropes was rotten, and she broke away in that squall with only me on board, and I ain't no sailor—I'm only a hired man on a farm, and I happened along, and they wanted me to grab in and help, and I was never on board a bo't before, and here I am going hellbent to somewhere, and I want to be saved," raged the terrified individual, making another try to leap over the rail into the yawl. For one moment Cap'n Sproul restrained the man; then he released his hold, and the fellow floundered into the boat alongside.

"I reckon you see now what we have here," said the cap'n, calling the attention of the tall man by a flourish of his hand. "This is vessel and cargo abandoned at sea. That critter abandoned when he went over the side just now. Keep your eyes open, Mr. Effort, and don't forget what you have seen. Straight stories are needed in salvage claims."

"I ain't interested in no salvage. What's salvage money going to amount to when a man gets into jail for letting the United States mail go to pot?" whined the skipper of the packet. His eyes were searching the sea. The *Effort* was cavorting far out toward the horizon. "This thing won't sail. I ain't going to waste time here. I'll row till I bust my gizzard, and the United States will have to own up that no man could do more'n that."

He leaped into the yawl. But before

he could touch the painter to cast off Cap'n Sproul reached over the rail, grabbed his collar, and yanked him back on deck. While the skipper was rolling on his back the cap'n secured the hired man in the same summary fashion.

"Vessel and cargo abandoned by all except me. Take note of that, the two of you. I'm master of this packet now by salvage rights. I've pressed a crew. And I know what to do in case of mutiny. If there's mutiny left in either of you, show it now, so that we can settle the matter."

He had plucked a belaying pin from its slot, and his quarter-deck manner was baleful and boding. The two men scrambled up, and blinked at him.

"All hands to rig taakul!" he roared. When the tall man hesitated, the cap'n walked up to him, and shook the pin under his nose. "Can't you see what I want to do? After we trim ship I can chase your infernal old packet, and you can go aboard her, and hug them United States mails, and rock 'em to sleep. Just now you're my man! Rig taakul, I tell ye!"

The *Effort's* skipper saw a glimmer of hope in the gloom of his forebodings.

There were planks and rollers on deck, placed there in readiness for use by the stevedores. Three men proved a rather short crew for the job of ratcheting the heavy boiler into a position where it would trim ship, but by dint of doubling the blocks, and manipulating the tackle under the experienced guidance of Cap'n Sproul, they performed the task at last. The wind was holding, and they made sail. That is to say, the cap'n and the tall man did so. No threats could drive the hired man to that duty. He bleated that putting up more sails would tip the boat over.

Night had fallen when Cap'n Sproul took the wheel at last, and headed in the direction where the errant *Effort* had been spied in the gathering twilight. Even with the steam boiler as cargo, the packet showed that she could pick up her heels in fine fashion. A white wake stretched back into the night, and the

bows churned yeast merrily. The tall man's courage revived. They were chasing the dodging *Effort* in a craft which was more than a match for that runaway. Then something else beside courage revived in the tall man.

"Instead of going in as a salvage pardner with you, and waiting for the claims to be settled, Cap'n Sproul, I'd just as soon make a cash settlement with you on this vessel and cargo," he said brazenly.

"That's both genteel and generous," replied the cap'n.

"Of course, I lost my head for a minute, but I didn't officially abandon."

"That is to say, in order to officially abandon you would serve thirty days' notice on me, same being printed on pink paper tied up with a blue ribbon and smelling of cologne water, eh?"

"There ain't any need of being sarcastic when an honest man wants what is due him. Salvage is salvage."

"You're right," agreed Cap'n Sproul. "I shall make the same remark to you when we step on board your *Effort*. We'll make a good thing out of this trip by agreeing that salvage is salvage."

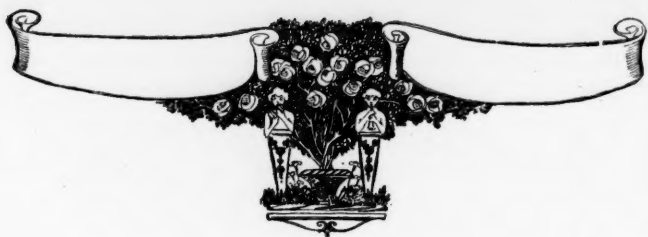
The tall man sat down on the deck, and seemed to be engaged in some very gloomy and abstruse calculations.

The hired man, whose appeals to be set immediately on shore had been checked by one ferocious yelp from Cap'n Sproul, was squatted on deck, groaning every time a swell lifted the packet, and plainly in a state of mind which matched that of the tall man.

Cap'n Sproul at the wheel, the slish of the salt breeze across his cheeks, the memory of sunbaked Scotaze in the back of his head making this keen delight of the open sea all the more glorious, whistled joyously, and appeared to disregard the gloom of his associates.

"So far this cruise has been what ye might call variegated," he told himself. "But, in the words of the old song, seeing that I'm having a vacation, 'I don't give a damn just where I sail, so long as I keep on sailing.'"

What further happened to Cap'n Aaron Sproul on the high seas will be related in the next number of SMITH'S.



How to Ward Off the Finger Prints of Time

By Dr. Lillian Whitney

ALL over the civilized world scientists are engaged in the study of prolonging life. What is of vastly more importance, and what really is at the bottom of these investigations, is the necessity—in our cruelly competitive times—for prolonging into a comparative old age the capacity of youth. Some years ago an eminent medical man, in addressing his students, remarked—by way of emphasizing the wisdom for acquiring habits of working efficiently while young—that at forty one's best days are over, and at sixty one should be chloroformed. The latter comment was, of course, said jestingly, but, coming from so eminent a source, these observations were flashed over two continents, and became a fruitful source of comment for a much longer period than the proverbial nine days.

They also created an immense interest in the question which Professor Osler so inadvertently brought up—namely: Are we inefficient at forty, and should we be Oslerized—the word has been coined—at sixty? This also awakened us to an undisputed fact that, in our horribly strenuous age, many are inefficient and drop by the wayside, others are forced to step aside, after reaching middle life, to younger and

more active blood; while others, the fortunate ones, who happily combine the eternal spirit of youth with a broad and comprehensive experience, serenely pass each milestone without turning a hair.

A distinguished European authority is convinced that he has discovered the cause of old age, and, what is more startling, he now claims to have found a microbe that will remove this cause, and asserts that if his theories could be carried out, a race might be founded upon which Father Time would be unable to leave his imprint. However wild this line of reasoning may appear, we must bear in mind the almost miraculous wonders performed by science within the past forty years, and that among the many great truths foreshadowed by Shakespeare, none has been more frequently quoted within recent times than Hamlet's brooding warning to his friend:

There are more things in heaven and earth,
Than are dreamed of in your philosophy.

Theories always precede facts, and before we can do more than lend an attentive ear to the fascinatingly interesting work engaged in by the famous savant referred to above, we must content ourselves with the means at our

command to defy Father Time, since old age is not only extremely unfashionable, but is completely discounted commercially. We Americans lead more strenuous lives than any other nation; it is true, we achieve more, roughly speaking, but at a tremendous cost. We age more rapidly, and die younger. Is it worth while?

We work incessantly, and never play. We take our pleasures on the wing, and they are usually of an unwholesome nature, such as eating and drinking for recreation; gathering by the hundreds in close, illy ventilated theaters or concert halls, where we breathe each others emanations, and in that way further poison the blood and choke up the system with germ-laden organic matter. We do not know the meaning of recreation in its truest, broadest sense.

A man past his first youth thinks he makes a ridiculous spectacle of himself if he goes out in his back yard and kicks a football around, or tosses a baseball about. Organized clubs—except those connected with schools and colleges—for out-of-door sports are practically unknown. We meet at each other's houses for a game of cards, but we would not dream of a cross-country tramp, of a game of hockey, of skiing, of winter golf, of skating—fancy a group of sedate middle-age folk forgetting their eminent respectability, forgetting their years, their cares, and responsibilities, forgetting everything but the wholesome delight engendered by the bracing exercise on an icy toboggan!

No, we do everything to invite premature old age, and in doing so miss the joy of life. Since, beside this, a youthful appearance has a distinct commercial value, it behooves all of us, in this competitive age, to *cultivate* youth. The society of young people is invigorating. Professor Osler, whether in the memorable address mentioned heretofore, or in another, advised his students to walk through life with "the boys." Mothers should never outgrow their daughters, except in wisdom and experience. This association with young, fresh minds enables one to maintain that youthful enthusiasm which manifests itself in an

assurance, a confidence, and a just pride in self. Without this, one is frequently apt to become despondent, and a hopeless, depressed attitude is the surest means of tracing premature lines upon the face and aging it perceptibly. Note the drooping mouth, the lines under the chin, and the forlorn look through the eyes in the accompanying illustration.

If we give way to depressing circumstances, we simply invite old age, for the symptoms of genuine old age are those of depression; all the vital functions are sluggishly performed, the circulation is feeble, the extremities are pale and cold, the gait has lost its elasticity, and there is a general air of lassitude. Victims of this condition are unable to see the beauty and joy of life, and become burdensome to themselves and others. We must maintain an optimistic viewpoint, and a correct attitude, otherwise we cannot bring out the best that is in us; and this is the first essential to the preservation of what natural charms we possess.

At thirty-five, unless the gods have singled one out particularly, the evidences of advancing years begin to leave their traceries. The tissues of the face and neck begin to sag, the complexion has, as a rule, already lost its freshness, and the "figure" shows a tendency toward lankiness or stoutness, according to one's habit. The hair begins to grow thin in patches, or gray in spots; one's inclination to luxuriate is greater, and to exercise is less. Tricks of manner have become habits, and if one has acquired the unpleasant practice of punctuating every remark with a frown, or of drawing down the mouth or pursing the lips, or of chewing gum constantly, as so many Americans do, the overworked muscles lose their resiliency and fall into ugly lines.

In both men and women the first signs of encroaching years appear at the chin and throat. Fastidious men dread a "statesman chin" as much as women do the extra fold of tissue which heralds to the world the fact that they are no longer "young." This unsightly sagging of the muscles is caused very largely by the habit of carrying the head low

upon the chest. Professional beauties, society women, and notable actresses never permit the chin to sink forward; the head is held high, with chin up and forward, whether asleep or awake, and by this means the sharp edge of the lower jaw is maintained, and one of the most beautiful lines in the female form, that exquisite curve from the chin to the breast, is preserved.

A well-known professional beauty, who spends a fortune yearly to ward off Father Time, remarks that "beauty comes high when it is one's business to be beautiful." If one's only stock in trade consists in the display of physical charms, then indeed does beauty come high; but every healthy being is inoculated with the praiseworthy desire to look pleasing to the eye, and this natural desire necessitates vigilance, eternal vigilance, first to checkmate the finger prints of time, and second to overcome and rout them. When the cheek muscles sag down below the jawbone, and the chin rests in folds upon the neck, no woman, however lovely her character, looks young and attractive.

Full directions for restoring drooping tissues have been given in previous articles, and the formula for a new massage cream to tone up and restore inelastic muscles will be sent on application.

The telltale lines about the ears betoken age, as a rule. Not always, for one occasionally sees them on very young girls, while in some quite elderly women they are never traced; the fact is that they depend very largely upon the manner in which ears are set in the head; when loosely set, the skin is apt

to fall in tiny wrinkles that can be massaged away with daily manipulation. Pinning back the ears with a fold of muslin, which is worn during sleep, is said to obviate the tendency of the loose tissue to crumple; and the old-fashioned custom of mothers of a bygone age, who incased the heads of their children in nightcaps to train their



A dejected attitude invites premature lines.

too obvious ears into position, is a capital thing to pursue for the same purpose when one is grown up.

When these telltale lines defy treatment, the hair can be fluffed and drawn down to hide them from view. Fluffy hair worn low upon the face is a great softener of age, and this is particularly true when the hair is becomingly arranged. So many women not only add to their actual number of years, but



Hold the chin up and forward.

make themselves otherwise unattractive by dressing the hair in a manner wholly unsuited to their "style." When the hair begins to grow thin and loses its brilliant gloss, it requires unremitting daily massage of the scalp, with vigorous brushing, to restore its tone.

The preventive treatment is here, as elsewhere, much more sensible, and to give the hair, while it is abundant and beautiful, excellent care, means to retain it into old age. However, when from any cause the hair has been lost, it is wiser to supplement what remains with perfectly matched, fluffy, artificial pieces of human hair of the best quality; the deception will then not be noticed, and it translates an aging woman into a young one. Nothing detracts from a woman's appearance so much, however, as artificial hair of a low grade, that does not match her own in either texture or color.

Hair that is prematurely gray can often be restored by toning up the system and applying a sage-tea lotion, the formula for which, with directions for making and applying, will gladly be

furnished; but no greater mistake can be made than dyeing gray or white hair when it has become so through age. Dyed hair has a curious effect upon an old face; it brings out every cruel line with startling clearness. Gray or white hair is one of nature's beautiful provisions; it softens the features, and gives an air of distinction to the homeliest countenance.

Unless a woman has a beautifully rounded figure, she is very apt to lose her youthful contours before she reaches her thirty-fifth year. A settled figure is old, even in a girl. A light, buoyant step should be cultivated from earliest childhood, and plenty of daily exercise, out of doors always when possible, indoors when not, to keep the figure trim and trig. Nowhere else is that homely adage—"an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," so markedly exemplified. A little daily exercise, a little daily thought, will keep the figure young; whereas neglect puts on flesh, stiffens the joints, rounds the shoulders, broadens the waist and back, and causes the spinal column to sink, so producing that squatty appearance frequently seen in men and women of middle age.

An enlarged abdomen is an unmistakable sign of encroaching years, and should be discouraged in every possible way. The well-known exercise, frequently alluded to in these papers, of bending forward from the waist, and touching the floor with the finger tips one hundred times while standing erect and rigid, is one of the surest means of reducing the objectionable size. An abdominal support, that can be readjusted to the figure as it diminishes, is an excellent thing for both men and women to wear. Directions for making such a support will be sent to any one interested.

In many instances the feet, willing slaves as they are, age long before the remainder of the body. To obviate this, and keep them young, supple, and sprightly, they should be rubbed every day with olive oil, or any other good lubricant; careful daily grooming, the utmost cleanliness of footwear, and oc-

casional medical foot baths, are also essential to this end.

FOR SENSITIVE, DELICATE FEET.

Dried mint.....	1 ounce
Dried sage.....	1 ounce
Dried angelica.....	3 ounces
Juniper berries.....	½ pound
Rosemary leaves.....	1 pound

Boil thirty minutes in five quarts of water; use at moderate heat, and immerse the feet in bath for fifteen minutes for several successive nights.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The following correspondents either failed to inclose stamps or to give their names.

MRS. C. M.—If you will send a self-addressed stamped envelope, full instructions for the development of the bust will gladly be furnished to you.

LEESBURG, Fla.—It will give me pleasure to send the name of the salt if you will comply with the rules of the department.

ARCHIBALD, Pa.—There is no charge attached to any formula supplied through this department. You can put up the following mixture yourself, or you can get your chemist to make it:

FRECKLES AND TAN.

Rose water.....	6 ounces
Glycerin	½ ounce
Bitter-almond water.....	2½ drams
Tincture of benzoin.....	2½ drams
Borax	1½ drams

Mix. This is Doctor Chevasse's preparation for tan, freckles, pimples, and the like. Rub the borax up with the glycerin, gradually adding the rose and almond waters, lastly the tincture of benzoin, agitating the mixture all the time. Apply night and morning.

R. D. J., Boise, Idaho.—You will find the following just what you want for a local skin food:

Lanolin	2 ounces
Coconut butter.....	2 ounces
Oil of sweet almonds.....	4 ounces
White wax.....	1 ounce
Spermaceti	1 ounce
Orange-flower water.....	2 ounces
Tincture of benzoin.....	½ dram

Your other questions will be answered upon receipt of self-addressed envelope.

MRS. R., Ottawa.—Equal parts of peroxide and household ammonia is the only liquid depilatory I would recommend. If you will write me again inclosing stamp, et cetera, I will send you further information.

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE.—Will you kindly send stamped envelope for reply?



Draw the hair down over the ears in fluffy curls.

"A FRIEND TO THE GIRLS."—I regret to say that my articles have not yet appeared in book form. However, if you wish any back numbers for the young ladies in question, they can easily be sent direct to them by ordering the magazines in which they appeared through the subscription department.

A. M. C.—The iced cloths are, if anything, even more valuable than the lotion referred to. The following astringent, applied to your arms and then covered with rubber sleevelets or oiled silk, should reduce them:

Iodide of potassium.....	½ dram
Colorless tincture of iodide.....	1 dram
Distilled water.....	10 ounces
Aniseed water.....	3 drams

MARY G.—You will find the following an excellent stimulating tonic for thin hair:

Resorcin	3 drams
Tincture of cantharides.....	1 ounce
Olive or castor oil.....	4 drams
Oil of rosemary.....	10 drops
Bay rum, sufficient to make.....	8 ounces

Rub up the scalp thoroughly first, then apply the tonic with friction massage for ten minutes.

BALTIMORE.—The treatment you want for obesity cure is successful only when persisted in. Before commencing it, granular effervescing sodium phosphate should be used three times a day for three days to relieve congestion in the portal circulation. The Vichy and Kissingen salts should be taken three times a day with meals. Vichy one

day, Kissingen the next, and so on—one dessert spoonful in one half glass of water, not too hot or too cold. In hot water the salts effervesce too quickly, and in very cold water the taste is too sharp. If the patient loses more than two pounds a week, one or two teaspoonfuls of lemon juice should be added to each dose of Kissingen, and one-half to one teaspoonful of aromatic spirits of ammonia to each dose of Vichy. Acid fruits, drinks, and food may be used on Kissingen days, and avoided on Vichy days. The food should be well masticated. Light suppers should be eaten, and nothing between meals.

A FRIEND IN NEED.—Why not have the tooth out if it cannot be saved?

The following is a perfumed mouth wash:

Oil of bitter almonds..... 5 drops
Glycerin 1 dram
Stronger tincture of orris..... 2 ounces
Spirit of rose..... 1½ ounces
Alcohol, enough to make..... 16 ounces

Mix with water as needed to suit your individual requirements.

ANNA MAY.—The only way in which you can hope to remove the lines under your eyes is by daily, gentle massage. Dip the tip of your index finger in warm, pure olive oil, and gently rub this into the wrinkled skin, the movements taking the direction from the nose outward toward the temple. Pursue this for five or ten minutes, then remove all excess of oil with a soft cloth, and apply the following astringent lotion with a bit of absorbent cotton:

Tannic acid 20 grains
Glycerin 1 ounce

CHARLES M.—You can procure the green walnut stain from any reliable druggist. If you will send a self-addressed, stamped envelope, a harmless treatment for darkening the hair will gladly be forwarded to you.

Outstanding ears can be corrected in childhood by the simple method of wearing a nightcap! Much can be done in later life, however, to make them more attractive. At bedtime bathe the ears in hot water and anoint them with warm oil, rubbing it in very gently but thoroughly until they feel quite soft and velvety; then tie them back by means of an ear lap or a bandage, which must be so adjusted that it remains undisturbed during sleep. After months of persistent effort the ears can, by this method, be trained to lie closer to the head.

MRS. R.—I sympathize with you. Moist or perspiring hands are extremely annoying, and at times even humiliating. You need not hesitate to discard gloves during the very warm months. We have grown very much

more sensible and hygienic in our ideas of dress necessities, and except for formal occasions, and in large cities, uncovered hands in midsummer are in good taste. The following lotion is one that you can place in a tiny vinaigrette and carry in your glove, using it as needed:

Tincture of belladonna..... 1 ounce
Cologne 3 ounces

Here is another lotion that you can rub on your hands as often as you wish:

Boric acid..... 80 grains
Borax 12 grains
Salicylic acid..... 150 grains
Glycerine 2 grains

JOHN R.—An article fully covering your questions appeared in the April number of this magazine. However, you will find a good remedy in the following:

DANDRUFF CURE.

Mercuric chlorid 1 grain
Resorcin 4 drams
Chloral hydrate..... 8 drams
Bay rum..... 8 ounces
Water, enough to make..... 14 ounces

If your hair is very dry, add about two drams of castor oil to this mixture, which you are to rub into the scalp once each day. When the dandruff ceases to form, use once every other day for two weeks, then once a week. *Label poison.*

MR. MAN.—Certainly, the so-called *liquid soap* can readily be made by any one. Here is one formula:

Powdered green Castile soap..... 1 ounce
Glycerine 1 ounce
Alcohol 1 ounce

The tincture of green soap of the U. S. Pharmacopœia is made in the following way: Soft green soap..... 10¾ ounces
Oil of lavender flowers..... 2½ drams
Alcohol, enough to make..... 16 ounces

Mix the oil with 5 ounces of alcohol, dissolve the soap in this by agitation or stirring; set aside for 24 hours, filter through paper, and then pass enough alcohol through the filter to make 16 ounces.

This makes a delightfully fragrant antiseptic liquid soap, excellent for an infinite number of purposes—as a shampoo, to improve the bath, to stimulate a sluggish skin, as a cleansing and stimulating wash in facial blemishes, and so on.

JUNE.—Prevention is better than cure. Try this means of preventing freckles and tan: Mix an ounce of precipitated chalk with one of glycerine, and sufficient water to fill a half-pint bottle. Shake before applying to the skin, which should be done just before going out.

Dr. Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those inclosing a self-addressed stamped envelope. Do not send Canadian stamps or coins. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.

DEEP BREATHING.

By D. O. Harrell, M. D.

I BELIEVE we must all admit that deep breathing is a very desirable practice. Furthermore, we know it to be a fact that not one person in twenty, or perhaps one person in a hundred, really breathes deeply. Every physician can verify the statement that we are daily called upon to prescribe drugs for ailments that owe their cause directly to insufficient and improper breathing.—Oxygen Starvation.

Breathing is the Vital Force of Life. Every muscle, nerve cell, in fact every fibre of our body, is directly dependent upon the air we breathe. Health, Strength and Endurance are impossible without well oxygenated blood. The food we eat must combine with abundant oxygen before it can become of any value to the body. Breathing is to the body what free draught is to the steam boiler. Shut off the draught, and you will kill your fire, no matter how excellent coal you use. Similarly, if you breathe shallowly, you must become anaemic, weak and thin, no matter how carefully you may select your diet.

I might continue indefinitely to cite examples of the great physiological value of deep breathing. For instance, it is a well-known fact that intense mental concentration and nerve strain paralyzes the diaphragm, the great breathing muscle. This depressing condition can be entirely counteracted through conscious deep breathing.

The main benefit of physical exercise lies in the activity it gives the lungs. What we term "lack of healthful exercise," in reality means insufficient lung exercise. Since few persons have the strength and endurance to exercise violently enough to stir the lungs into rapid action, common sense dictates that the lungs should be exercised independently, through conscious breathing. Exercise that fails to excite vigorous lung action is of little real value.

Unfortunately, few persons have the slightest conception of what is really meant by deep breathing. In fact, few physicians

thoroughly understand the act. Ask a dozen different physical instructors to define deep breathing, and you will receive a dozen different answers. One tells you it means the full expansion of the chest, another tells you it means abdominal breathing, the third declares it means diaphragmatic breathing, and so on. In the end, one becomes thoroughly confused, and justly forms the opinion that most teachers of physical culture are incompetent to teach deep breathing.

Recently there has been brought to my notice a brochure on this important subject of respiration, that to my knowledge for the first time really treats the subject in a thoroughly scientific and practical manner. I refer to the booklet entitled, "Deep Breathing," by Paul Von Boeckmann, R. S., 107 Park Ave., New York. In this treatise, the author describes proper breathing, so that even the most uninformed layman can get a correct idea of the act. The booklet contains a mass of common sense teachings on the subject of Deep Breathing, Exercise and Body Building. The author has had the courage to think for himself, and to expose the weaknesses in our modern systems of physical culture.

I believe this booklet gives us the real key to constitutional strength. It shows us plainly the danger of excessive exercise, that is, the danger of developing the external body at the expense of the internal body. The author's arguments are so logical it is self-evident that his theories must be based upon vast experience. Personally, I know that his teachings are most profoundly scientific and thoroughly practical, for I have had occasion to see them tested in a number of my patients.

The booklet to which I refer can be had from the author directly upon payment of 10 cents in coin or stamps. The simple exercises he describes therein are in themselves well worth ten times the small price demanded.

Until a short time ago, scarcely one person in a thousand had ever tasted a really good soda cracker — as it came fresh and crisp from the oven.

Now every man, woman and child in these United States can know and enjoy the crisp goodness of fresh baked soda crackers without going to the baker's oven.

Uneeda Biscuit bring the bakery to you.

A food to live on. Stamina for workers. Strength for the delicate. Bone and flesh for little folks.

It will cost you just 5 cents to try Uneeda Biscuit.

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The Business of This Place is to Raise Salaries

That sounds queer, doesn't it? And yet there is such a place in reality—*The International Correspondence Schools*, of Scranton, Pa., an institution the entire business of which is to raise not merely salaries—but *your salary*.

To achieve that purpose the I. C. S. has a working capital of many millions of dollars, owns and occupies three large buildings, covering seven acres of floor space, and employs 3000 trained people, all of whom have one object in view—to make it easy for you and all poorly-paid men to earn more. Truly then—the *business of this place is to raise salaries*.

Every month an average of 400 I. C. S. students *voluntarily* report increased salaries. In 1911 over 5000 students so reported. These students live in every section. Right in their own homes, at their present work, the I. C. S. *goes to them*, trains them to advance in their chosen line, or to profitably change to a more congenial occupation.

The same opportunity now knocks at your door. What are you going to do with it? Are you going to lock the door in its face and lag along at the same old wages, or are you going to open the door and give the I. C. S. a chance to show you? Perhaps you don't see how, but the I. C. S. does. That is its business—to *raise your salary*.

Here is all you have to do. From the list in the attached coupon select the position you prefer, and mark and mail the coupon today. It costs you nothing but the stamp to learn how the I. C. S. can raise *your salary*.

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Box 899 SCRANTON, PA.

Explain, without further obligation on my part, how I can qualify for the position before which I mark X.

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Civil Engineer
Surveyor
Mine Superintendent
Metal Mining
Locomotive Fireman & Eng.
Stationary Engineer
Textile Manufacturing
Gas Engines
Automobile Running

Civil Service
Railway Mail Clerk
Bookkeeping
Stenography & Typewriting
Window Trimming
Show Card Writing
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WHY LOSE YOUR HAIR



CUTICURA SOAP SHAMPOOS

And occasional light dressings of Cuticura Ointment will prevent it when all else fails. No other emollients do so much for irritated, itching scalps, dandruff, dry, thin and falling hair, or do it so speedily, agreeably and economically.



Cuticura Soap and Ointment are sold everywhere. For sample of each, with 32-p. book, free, address "Cuticura," Dept. 133, Boston.

TENDER-FACED MEN

Should shave with Cuticura Soap Shaving Stick, 2c. Makes shaving a pleasure instead of a torture. Liberal sample free.

Save Your Eyes

Simple Home Treatment Will Enable You to Throw Away Your Glasses

"How to Save the Eyes"
is the title of a
FREE BOOK

At last the good news can be published. It is predicted that within a few years eyeglasses and spectacles will be so scarce that they will be regarded as curiosities.

Throughout the civilized world there has, for several years, been a recognized movement by educated medical men, particularly eye experts, toward treating sore, weak or strained eyes rationally. The old way was to fit a pair of glasses as soon as the eyes were found to be strained. These glasses were nothing better than crutches. They never overcame the trouble, but merely gave a little relief while being worn and they make the eyes gradually weaker. Every wearer of eyeglasses knows that he might as well expect to cure rheumatism by leaning upon a walking stick.

The great masses of sufferers from eye strain and other curable optic disorders have been misled by those who were making fortunes out of eyeglasses and spectacles.

Get Rid of Your Glasses

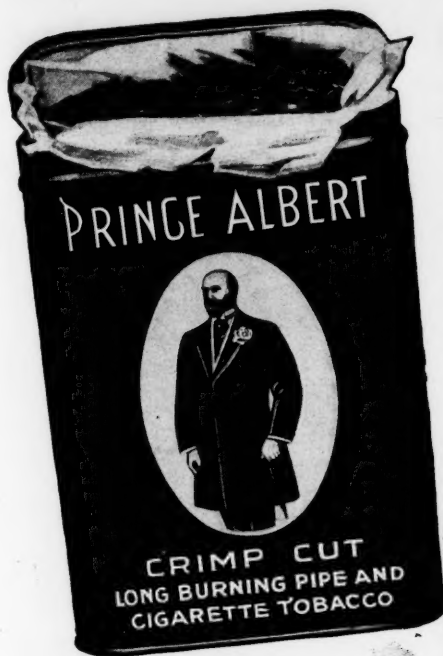
Dr. John L. Corliss, an able New York physician of long experience, has come forward with the edict that eyeglasses must go. Intelligent people everywhere are endorsing him. The Doctor says that the ancients never disfigured their facial beauty with goggles. They employed certain methods which have recently been brought to the light of modern science. Dr. Corliss has written a marvelous book entitled, "How to Save the Eyes," which tells how they may be benefited, in many cases, instantly. There is an easy home treatment which is just as simple as it is effective, and it is fully explained in this wonderful book, which will be sent free to any one. A postal card will bring it to your very door. This book tells you why eyeglasses are needless and how they may be put aside forever. When you have taken advantage of this information obtained in this book you may be able to throw your glasses away and should possess healthy, beautiful, soulfully expressive, magnetic eyes that indicate the true character and win confidence.

Bad Eyes Bring Bad Health

Dr. Corliss goes further. He asserts that eyestrain is the main cause of headaches, nervousness, inability, neurasthenia, brain fog, sleeplessness, stomach disorders, despondency and many other disorders. Leading oculists of the world confirm this and say that a vast amount of physical and mental misery is due to the influence of eyestrain upon the nerves and brain cells. When eyestrain is overcome these ailments usually disappear as if by magic.

Free to You

The Okola Method, which is fully explained in Dr. Corliss's marvelous book, is the method which is directed at making your eyes normal and saving them from the disfigurement of these needless, unpleasant glass windows. If you wear glasses or feel that you should be wearing them, or if you are troubled with headache in the forehead or nervousness when your eyes are tired, write to-day to Okola Laboratory, Dept. 155, Rochester, N. Y., and ask them to send you, postage prepaid, free of all charge, the book entitled, "How to Save the Eyes," and you will never regret the step taken.



Get in the game with a jimmy pipe

Hit the top notch of tobacco delight by jamming your jimmy brimful of Prince Albert. *Right there* is first water pipe joy, because P. A. simply can't bite your tongue. The "broil" is cut out by a patented process.

PRINCE ALBERT

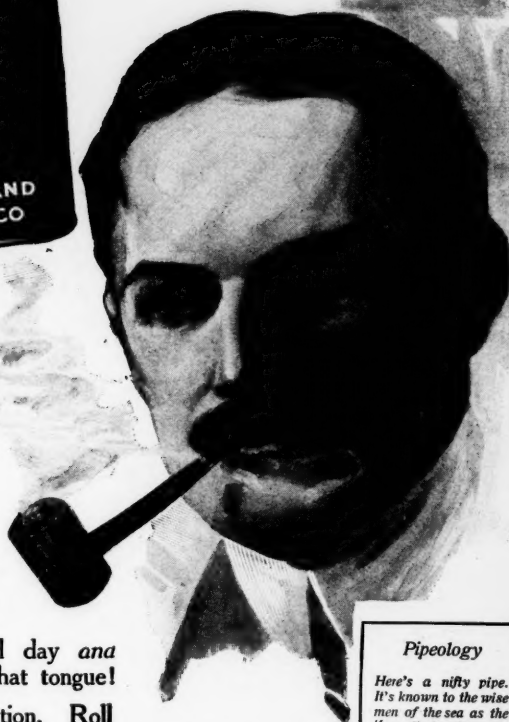
the national joy smoke

Got everything you or any other pipe enthusiast ever yearned for—flavor, aroma, and long burning qualities. You can smoke it all day *and all night*, too! Never a tingle on that tongue!

As a cigarette P. A. is a revelation. Roll one up and see how quickly you cross your fingers on the *dust-brands* and *fire-brands*!

Buy P. A. everywhere in toppy 5c red bags, 10c tidy red tins and handsome pound and half-pound humidors.

R. J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO CO., Winston-Salem, N. C.



Pipeology

Here's a nifty pipe. It's known to the wise men of the sea as the "mess" pipe. It's bowl is round, with a flat bottom and "stays put," no matter how high the waves are running. Made of all grades briar with hard rubber, bone and amber bits.

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AGENTS, male and female can make big money selling my great number of imported specialties listed in my big illustrated catalogue. Contains many rare and exceptional money makers. Send for it to-day. Joseph Gluck, 621 Broadway, New York City.

ANSWER THIS: Best side line yet. New. Pays all expenses. \$4.00 per order. Two to four orders a day sure. Pocket sample. Temby Jewelry Co., 2005 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago.

AGENTS MAKE BIG MONEY and become sales managers for our goods. Fast office sellers. Fine profits. Particulars and sample free. One Dip Pen Company, Dept. 9, Baltimore, Md.

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\$3.00 PAID for the rare cent of 1856. \$25.00 for the rare silver dollar of 1858. Keep money dated before 1890, and send 10 cents for new coin value book. A. H. Kraus, 225 Kraus Bldg., Milwaukee, Wis.

Games & Entertainment

PLAYS, Vaudeville Sketches, Monologues, Dialogues, Speakers, Minstrel Material, Jokes, Recitations, Tableaux, Drills, Entertainments. Make Up Goods. Large Catalog Free. T. S. Denison & Co., Dept. 10, Chicago.

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BARTOW—The best town, in the best county, in the best state, in the best country in the world. Center of citrus fruit culture and general farming. Write Board of Trade, Bartow, Florida.

HOUSE for sale cheap; 2 lots, 56 ft. front, 9 rooms and bath, all improvements, in a fine, healthy and growing section on the line of the New Bronx Valley Park, West Mt. Vernon section. 30 minutes from Grand Central Station N. Y. City. "Owner" 99 Crescent Place, Sherwood Park, Yonkers, New York.

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PATENT your ideas. \$9.00 Offered for Certain Inventions. Book "How to Obtain a Patent" and "What to Invent." Sent free. Send rough sketch for free report as to patentability. Patents obtained or fee returned. We advertise your patent for sale at our expense. Established 16 years. Address Chandlee & Chandlee, Patent Attys., 978 F St., Washington, D. C.

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THE ladder up which the fireman climbs to put out the fire must be safe. Every inch of its lumber must be seasoned and sound.

So ought the insurance company on which you depend for payment of your loss be safe. It must be seasoned by long experience and sound by many trials of its strength.

No company meets these requirements better than the old HARTFORD. So when you need fire insurance

Insist on the Hartford

Agents Everywhere



This \$3 Silver Set Free

Full Set, Worth \$3.00

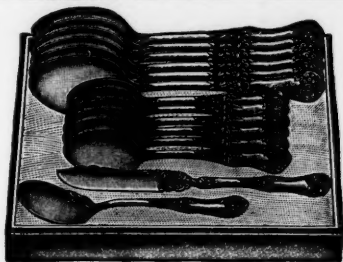
6 Teaspoons Butter Knife
6 Tablespoons Sugar Shell

This handsome 12-piece Silver Set is made by the Wm. Rogers Mfg. Co. of the highest grade, good heavy nickel silver metal, finely finished, and fully warranted not to wear off. The beautiful flower design is nicely embossed on all pieces.

Half Set, Worth \$1.50

6 Teaspoons Butter Knife Sugar Shell

This half set contains 8 pieces of the same fine design and high quality as the full set described above. Comes in fancy silverware box.



Here is this month's offer—a \$3 gift—which will never be offered again. The offer expires on Nov. 1.

If you write before then for our Home Lovers' Bargain Book—Fall Issue—we will send you with it the order for this set.

It will call for the whole set, entirely free, with any order for \$20 or over. Or it calls for the half set—a \$1.50 set—with any \$10 order or over.

4,528 Home Things 3 Cents a Day

This mammoth book pictures 4,528 bargains in household necessities, picked up from 250 factories. Many of the pictures are in actual colors. It's the largest exhibit ever brought together.

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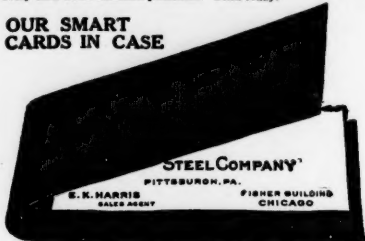
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A generation ago the horizon of speech was very limited. When your grandfather was a young man, his voice could be heard on a still day for perhaps a mile. Even though he used a speaking trumpet, he could not be heard nearly so far as he could be seen.

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Talking two thousand miles is an everyday occurrence, while in order to see this distance, you would need to mount your telescope on a platform approximately 560 miles high.

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